

NOV 2 1945

# COLLEGE ENGLISH

NOVEMBER • 1945

# COLLEGE ENGLISH

AN OFFICIAL ORGAN of the NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

W. WILBUR HATFIELD, *Editor*

LA TOURETTE STOCKWELL, *Assistant Editor*

## ADVISERS

ELECTED BY THE SUBSCRIBERS

ERNEST BERNBAUM, University of Illinois	KEMP MALONE, Johns Hopkins University
OSCAR JAMES CAMPBELL, Columbia University	MARJORIE NICOLSON, Columbia University
GEORGE R. COFFMAN, University of North Carolina	LOUISE POUND, University of Nebraska
HARDIN CRAIG, University of North Carolina	GEORGE F. REYNOLDS, University of Colorado
NORMAN FOERSTER, University of Iowa	WINFIELD H. ROGERS, Woman's College, University of North Carolina
CHARLES C. FRIES, University of Michigan	CLARENCE D. THORPE, University of Michigan
JAMES H. HANFORD, Western Reserve University	HELEN C. WHITE, University of Wisconsin
TREMAINE McDOWELL, University of Minnesota	

## Vol. 7 CONTENTS FOR NOVEMBER 1945 No. 2

MODERN INNOVATIONS	Thomas H. Uzzell	59
ROBERT FROST: A TIME TO LISTEN	Reginald L. Cook	66
SCHOLARS OR GENTLEMEN?	R. M. Weaver	72
THE MARVELOUS CHILD OF THE ENGLISH STAGE	Richard D. Altick	78
THE STRUCTURE OF THE MODERN SHORT STORY	A. L. Bader	86
N.C.T.E. ELECTION NOTICE		92
TEACHING THE HEART OF LITERATURE	Calvin D. Linton	93
WHAT FRESHMAN COMPOSITION CANNOT DO	H. Bunker Wright	98
ROUND TABLE		
Emily Dickinson	Lieutenant Ralph Marcellino	102
Veteran Education	A Member of N.C.T.E.	103
CURRENT ENGLISH FORUM		104
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH		
Minneapolis Council Program		106
SUMMARY AND REPORT		112
BOOKS		
Shakespeare's Sonnets Illumined	G. E. Bentley	118
Learning Our Language	V. C. Coulter	118
Spelling at College Level	Ellen M. Geyer	119
In Brief Review		121

*College English* is published monthly from October to May at the University of Chicago Press, 5750 Ellis Avenue, Chicago, Illinois. Subscription price, \$3.00 per year, single copies, 40 cents; in Canada, \$3.35; in other countries in the Postal Union, \$3.60. *College English* and the *English Journal*, to one address, \$4.50; in Canada, \$5.20; in other countries in the Postal Union, \$5.70.

Correspondence from libraries, agents, and dealers should be addressed to the University of Chicago Press. All other communications should be addressed to *College English*, 211 West Sixty-eighth Street, Chicago, Illinois.

Entered as second-class matter September 26, 1939, at the post office at Chicago, Illinois, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

[ PRINTED IN THE U.S.A. BY THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS ]

**Now available . . .**

**plenty of stock of . . .**

**Perrin's**

## **WRITER'S GUIDE AND INDEX TO ENGLISH**

We're mighty sorry that we ran out of stock of WRITER'S GUIDE this fall. We estimated that we would have just about enough books to fill orders. But we hadn't counted on so many new adoptions nor such large reorders. We just didn't have enough copies to go around; and, hurry as we would, the new printing was late for many of our good customers. Now, as conditions in the printing industry, as elsewhere, return to normal, we'll certainly try not to let it happen again.

**College Department**

**SCOTT, FORESMAN AND COMPANY**

### **Just Published**

## *Enlarged, improved edition of* **GOOD READING**

The most popular reading list for college students and adults. Only highly significant titles, most of them available in dollar editions. Annotated.

---

*For your majors who will teach next year, arrange*

## **JUNIOR MEMBERSHIPS**

including either *College English* or *The English Journal*.  
Dues only \$1.75 for a year . . . \$1.00 for a semester

---

**NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH**

211 WEST SIXTY-EIGHTH STREET • CHICAGO 21

## BOOK NEWS

### FROM FACT TO FICTION

*By Edmund Ware  
and Robeson Bailey*

**T**HIS book combines the knowledge of a successful writer of short stories and a successful teacher of short story technique. The book was motivated by the success of the illustrative plan when used in experimental class discussions. A dozen of Edmund Ware's stories are printed in the book, prefaced by an account of how they came into being and the technical problems involved in their composition. The stories are followed by generalizations made by Professor Bailey on the short story principles brought out by the stories. The method has proved effective in helping would-be writers to materialize their inspirations into finished stories which are technically sound and acceptable for publication.

### THE PRACTICE OF ENGLISH FUNDAMENTALS

*By Joseph M. Bachelor  
and Harold L. Haley*

**H**ERE is a workbook for college freshmen which deals fully and forcefully with the fundamentals of English grammar. The emphasis is upon use with just enough theory to clarify and motivate practice. An abundance of rigorous exercises drive home the fundamentals of the sentence, grammar, punctuation, and spelling. The constant application of principles renders the writing and speaking of good English almost automatic. The exercises are interesting and progress from the simple to the difficult. Diagnostic tests for determining student progress follow each unit, and a short, concise reference grammar has been included for reference purposes. The book is notable for its down-to-earth treatment of principles, and the logical organization of its topics. \$1.35.

**D. APPLETON-CENTURY COMPANY**  
35 WEST 32ND STREET, NEW YORK 1, NEW YORK



GRAMMAR  
SPELLING  
PUNCTUATION

ARE FUN!

# REFRESHER IN COLLEGE COMPOSITION

By

MABEL E. STRONG, *University of Nebraska*

320 pp.

\$2.25

"I have almost nothing but good to say about Professor Strong's REFRESHER IN COLLEGE COMPOSITION. It is aimed directly at the student and in his own language, without over-simplification.

"For a wonder, there is humor in this textbook. I found myself reading it with interest and at times with amusement.

"Miss Strong's drills and exercises are always concrete and to the point, and she has a knack of giving them a smooth progression of difficulty. They really teach and do the job by inveigling the student into teaching himself.

"I admire the author's originality of approach, her freshness and zest. Wherever a 'refresher' course in English is to be given, this book will be considered very favorably and, I think, widely adopted."

DR. C. F. HARROLD, *Professor of English, The Ohio State University*

**LONGMANS, GREEN & CO., Inc.**

55 Fifth Avenue  
New York 3

215 Victoria Street  
Toronto 1

## ● Outstanding P-H English Texts ●

*proven a successful vocabulary builder . . .*

### CONCERNING WORDS

Revised

*By J. E. NORWOOD*

**A**iming to increase students' vocabularies, this combination workbook and manual uses the very simple and effective method of teaching them to break each word up into suffix, prefix, and root. Individual exercises are integrated with theory, so the student has the opportunity to apply what he learns as he learns it. There is sufficient material for a two-hour course.

89 pages

*College List 95¢*

*every freshman should have one!*

### USING BOOKS AND LIBRARIES

*By ELLA V. ALDRICH*

**H**ere is a concise, non-technical manual that tells the student quickly and simply how to use the library. It answers all his questions about indexes, locating reference books, using card catalogs, etc. Pages are included on which the student can work out a complete bibliography.

86 pages

*College List 75¢*

*a complete and authoritative grammar!*

### DESCRIPTIVE ENGLISH GRAMMAR

*By H. C. HOUSE and SUSAN EMOLYN HARMAN*

**O**ver 300 diagrammatic illustrations simplify and clarify word and clause relationships in this scholarly, thorough grammar. The authors give special attention to sentence analysis and to the English verb system. The text is designed primarily for drill and exercise.

366 pages

*College List \$1.50*

*the emphasis is on drill!*

### PRACTICE WRITING

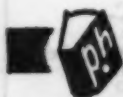
*By J. E. NORWOOD*

**T**his is a drill manual featuring the self-discipline method of review. The material is presented in informal classroom style, and avoids the stilted phraseology of many drill manuals.

218 pages

*College List \$1.50*

*Send for approval copies*



**PRENTICE-HALL, INC.** 70 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK 11

Thorpe-Curti-Baker

## AMERICAN ISSUES

*Volume One—The Social Record*

*Volume Two—The Literary Record*

- These companion anthologies offer the basis for a broad historical and literary study of American writing from colonial times to the present. Volume One contains the historical writings, Volume Two the belles-lettres. To Volume One has recently been added a section on the Second World War.

*Volume One—1100 pages, \$3.50 list*

*Volume Two—908 pages, \$3.25 list*

Hook-Ekstrom

## TOWARD BETTER ENGLISH

- Eighty per cent of the exercises in this workbook can be corrected by a simple time-saving device. The workbook presents a new theme-correction system, as well as other useful innovations.

*310 pages, \$1.25 list*

Blodgett

## THE STORY SURVEY

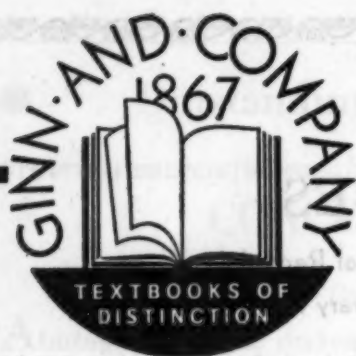
- Includes sixty-five stories, English, Continental, and American, illustrating the varieties of the form over the past hundred years.

*798 pages, \$2.90 list*

*Examination copies will be furnished  
on request*

**J. B. Lippincott Company**

CHICAGO • PHILADELPHIA • NEW YORK



*Straight from  
the College  
Classroom!*

# THE ENGLISH HERITAGE

Weatherly : Moffett  
Prouty : Noyes

Now your students can know a wide selection of authors without being confused by too many minor figures. The **ENGLISH HERITAGE** gives ample coverage to both prose and poetry. Based on a survey course in English literature at the University of Missouri and elsewhere, it offers a representative body of vital interesting literature for a year's study. For the most part only complete works or complete divisions of works are used. Scattered through the text are seven full plays. These show the development through the centuries of English drama with the exception of Shakespeare. The layout is attractive, with literary maps by top-flight cartographer, Erwin Raisz. There are chronological tables of important events and bibliography for additional reading. *Ask for THE ENGLISH HERITAGE!*

## GINN and Company

Boston 17 • New York 11 • Chicago 16 • Atlanta 3  
Dallas 1 • Columbus 16 • San Francisco 5 • Toronto 5



# COLLEGE ENGLISH

Volume 7

NOVEMBER 1945

Number 2

## Modern Innovations<sup>1</sup>

THOMAS H. UZZELL<sup>2</sup>

ARE today's technical practices in the construction of novels improvements upon older methods? Which of them must a novelist today understand and use in order to be "modern"? The true importance of modernism in the novel is lost on many of its students. They tend to overestimate the importance of the more obvious technical devices, such as stream of consciousness, documentary arrangements, spirit-of-the-times newsreel flashes, multiple viewpoints, and the like and to underestimate the revolutionary importance of new subject matter and the objectivity with which it is presented. They fail to note, for example, that in a certain sense the modern novel has no characteristics, other than those due to new subject matter and the scientific attitude. Most of the technical devices, like those just mentioned, can be found in one guise or another in the pages of the older masters.

The literally sensational effects produced by the new subject matter and

scientific attitude must seriously engage our attention. As we understand their possibilities, we shall see that novelties in presentation such as flash-news headlines, newsreel bulletins, "camera-eye" transcriptions (Dos Passos), and radio-announcer soliloquies (Steinbeck's interchapters) are the offspring of our most vigorous modern realists trying by every possible device to throw their new material most briefly and vividly before their readers.

### I. THE NEW SUBJECT MATTER

The core of modernism in the novel is realism.<sup>3</sup> This is true of romance as well as of the new realism: as a matter of fact, the great problem the modern romantic writer faces is how to apply the methods of naturalism to romance—a problem as yet by no means altogether solved.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> "Realism" is a large term which may be applied to any effort to present the factual truths about life. "Naturalism" is a form of realism which portrays the physical as well as the spiritual life of man; it places emphasis on those values that derive from the animal in man. "Romanticism" is another general term which labels any effort at an emotionally intelligible interpretation of life.

<sup>4</sup> The nearest to a solution is, I suppose, D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and Hemingway's *Farewell to Arms* with intimations of what is to come in the first half of Sinclair Lewis' *Arrowsmith*, dealing with the hero's first marriage.

<sup>1</sup> The final chapter of *The Technique of the Novel*, to be published early in 1946.

<sup>2</sup> Author of *Narrative Technique and Writing as a Career*; formerly teacher of fiction writing at Columbia and New York universities; private literary counsel.

After generations of novels treating marriage as contracts signed in heaven, readers of novels are now willing to believe that they are made in a much more terrestrial atmosphere; they are willing, and eager, too, I believe, to read novels which picture the ecstasies and triumphs of love handled on a definitely realistic basis. The greatest future triumphs of realism will be in the romantic, not the realistic, story; but the first victories are being worked out now with man's miseries rather than his joys, which will explain why in this discussion of new subject matter I shall roam among tragedies rather than comedies!

The comparatively swift evolution of the modern novel has paralleled the rapid evolution of life itself during the last hundred years. The moral revolution—really beginning, I suppose, with the year 1859, which saw the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species*—has swept away previous centuries of customs and conventions. Darwin, and later Freud, who began publishing his findings around 1900, displaced a personal God; it was a new world which excited the younger writers of each decade, who plunged in among the new scenes where angels never even thought of treading and which shocked and brought despair to critics too old or too steeped in Victorianism ever to understand fully what was going on. Vast contributions to an understanding of man's life on earth were pouring out. The story of these discoveries and their significance has been told many times and with great eloquence; here we need only glance at the new realism to which this new knowledge gave rise. It has created two new levels of realism. We can identify three levels altogether, thus:

A. *The physical*: portrayal of surface facts such as may be observed with the five senses

B. *The psychological*: portrayal of man's inner responses, his memories, associative fringes, emotions, fantasies, sentiments, dreams, and the nebulous but vastly important stirrings of the subconscious lying at the threshold of the mind

C. *The biological*: portrayal not only of surfaces, environment, and inner life but the interaction between them; facts and interpretations which reveal not only lives but life, which deal with and illuminate both the origin and the destiny of man

#### A. PHYSICAL REALISM

While we have seen notable achievements in the poetic rendering of physical realism in novelists of the past generation, as in the pages of D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, and Thornton Wilder, we can find no improvement in the sheer preciseness, the scientific accuracy, and the picture-making selection of words achieved some ninety years ago by Flaubert, by De Maupassant, and, later, by their disciples such as Thomas Hardy and Arnold Bennett. Modern realists are more impressionistic in their descriptions—they are content with broad, simply worded treatments of surfaces. A modern author, for example, would write like this: "She stood smiling in the rain beneath her white umbrella which lighted up her face." Flaubert took off a couple of days to achieve this (in *Madame Bovary*): "The sunshade, of silk of the color of pigeons' breasts, through which the sun shone, lighted up with shifting hues the white skin of her face. She smiled under the tender warmth, and drops of water could be heard falling one by one on the stretched silk." Novelists of today have much to learn.

#### B. PSYCHOLOGICAL REALISM

The greatest single triumph in modern psychological realism has been the stream of consciousness, although its origins, which I have not space to trace, antedate

by many years its most notable appearance in James Joyce's *Ulysses*. One of the most extraordinary achievements in modern fiction, the last movement in Joyce's masterpiece is altogether an "interior monologue" which runs to over thirty thousand words. The stream of consciousness is merely one way, the most direct way, of reporting on the subjective or psychic state of people, the less direct, and most commonly used method being descriptions in the author's own words. The vast new body of facts, physiological and psychological, given the world by modern explorations in the mental sciences, and especially by the revolutionary discoveries of Freud over a generation ago in the realm of the subconscious, have worked so great an advance in literary realism as to make all novels written before the turn of the century seem antiquated, if not naïve. Today a novelist without at least a grounding in the fundamentals of psychology will attempt a realistic character novel without much chance of success.

The peculiar difficulty of presenting psychological facts, however, is that the writer has direct evidence only of his own introspections; however abundant his evidence from others, he must still make inferences. This limitation tends to a similarity in inner states in all the characters of a psychological novel. De Maupassant condemned the psychologizing novelist, claiming that he inevitably made all his characters like himself. The writings of highly introverted writers, especially women, invariably suffer from this tendency. To me, for example, all the characters in the novels of Virginia Woolf, filled with beauty as they are, think and feel like nervous women. Her characters, moreover, are so exhaustively psychologized that they seem seized with locomotor ataxia; she, like Dostoev-

ski, and even Joyce, dissects motives with such thoroughness that the characters' capacity for action, which alone is significant, fails them, and they vanish, swooning, in the maze of their complexes.

As an example of the simplest kind of internal picture of a character which has nothing "modern" about it but which integrates the character with the setting (in this case the author's main concern), we have these lines from Sinclair Lewis' *Main Street*:

In all the town not one building save the Ionic bank which gave pleasure to Carol's eyes; not a dozen buildings which suggested that, in the fifty years of Gopher Prairie's existence, the citizens had realized that it was either desirable or possible to make this, their common home, amusing or attractive.

Here is no emphasis on psychological revelation as such, although the passage is entirely adequate for the purpose intended.

A much more impressive inner view is to be found in Thornton Wilder's portrait of the archbishop in his *Bridge of San Luis Rey*:

There was something in Lima that was wrapped up in yards of violet satin from which protruded a great dropsical head and two fat pearly hands; and that was its archbishop. Between the rolls of flesh that surrounded them looked out two black eyes speaking discomfort, kindness and wit. A curious and eager soul was imprisoned in all this lard, but by dint of never refusing himself a pheasant or a goose or his daily procession of Roman wines, he was his own bitter jailer. He loved his cathedral; he loved his duties; he was very devout. Some days he regarded his bulk ruefully, but the distress of remorse was less poignant than the distress of fasting and he was presently found deliberating over the secret messages that a certain roast sends to the certain salad that will follow it. And to punish himself he led an exemplary life in every other respect.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Quoted by permission of Thornton Wilder and of Albert and Charles Boni.



In this brief passage we find combined (integrated again) physical and psychological realism which approaches Flaubert's ideal of description—that it should reveal the whole moral nature of man. In the emphasis on the animal in the man and its relation to his spiritual nature we have a touch of modern naturalism. The slyly ironic yet sympathetic flavor of the whole treatment bespeaks a high order of talent.

For the most flawless literary psychologizings that reach subconscious as well as conscious depths we must turn to Joyce's *Ulysses*. From this inexhaustible library of every conceivable device for looking at the life of a character from inside out, I take two passages. Both portray women. The first, in the midst of the scene where Bloom encounters Gerty MacDowell on the seashore and flirts with her without either of them speaking, is interesting in that it attains a lyric note of romance in a work noted for its naturalistic horrors. We are told that "from everything in the least indelicate her finebred nature instinctively recoiled." Gerty is aware that Bloom is watching her, and we have her thoughts which are on the conscious level. The author gives them in his own words:

Perhaps it was an old flame he was in mourning for from the days beyond recall. She thought she understood. She would try to understand him because men were so different. The old love was waiting, waiting with little white hands stretched out, with blue appealing eyes. Heart of mine! She would follow her dream of love, the dictates of her heart that told her he was her all in all, the only man in all the world for her for love was the master guide. Nothing else mattered. Come what might she would be wild, untrammelled, free.<sup>6</sup>

The other passage is from the famous final section devoted altogether to Mrs. Bloom's stream of consciousness. It is

<sup>6</sup> Quoted by permission of Random House, Inc.

unpunctuated, unbroken, uncensored, rich in subconscious as well as conscious promptings, and, though the woman lies in bed throughout, streams past with scenes enlivened with dramatic action. The passage begins with a sharp outer stimulus, followed immediately with directly related sense associations which are the stuff of dreams of both day and night:

frseeeeeeeffronnnng train somewhere whistling the strength those engines have in them like big giants and the water rolling all over and out of them all sides like the end of Loves old sweet sonnnng the poor men that have to be out all night from their wives and families in those roasting engines stifling it was today I'm glad I burned the half of those old Freemans and Photo bits leaving things like that lying around hes getting very careless and threw the rest of them up in the W C<sup>6</sup>

The commonest and most useful perhaps of all stream-of-consciousness techniques is the shift from indirect statement to direct (the stream itself) and possibly back again without introduction. The economy and swiftness of this device, if used with clarity, are obvious. The ultimate possibilities would seem to be the use in one and the same passage of all three persons, an example of which we find in *Grapes of Wrath*. Within its few lines third person shifts to first, then to third, to second, and back to third, and all is quite clear:

One man, one family driven from the land; this rusty car creaking along the highway to the west. I lost my land, a single tractor took my land. I am alone and I am bewildered. And in the night one family camps in a ditch and another family pulls in and the tents come out. The two men squat on their hams and the women and children listen. Here is the node, you who hate change and fear revolution. Keep those two squatting men apart; make them hate, fear, suspect each other. Here is the anlage of the thing you fear. This is the zygote. For here "I lost my land" is changed; a cell is split and from its splitting grows the thing you hate



—"We lost our land." The danger is here, for two men are not as lonely and perplexed as one.<sup>7</sup>

#### C. BIOLOGICAL REALISM

When a novelist, in reporting on lives, tells us also about life, he is a biological realist. If all life is man's struggle with his environment, biological truth concerns the full story of stimulus and response as people in general know it. Realism of this lofty kind will be found in all those novels, like *Vanity Fair*, *War and Peace*, *Old Wives' Tale*, *Point Counter Point*, *The Good Earth*, and *Grapes of Wrath*, which give the reader not only the external and internal facts about people but also the relation between the two sets of facts in terms of human destiny. Biological realism includes physical and psychological realism, as the latter, when it is not overworked, includes the physical.

For an example of biological realism we turn to *Between the Acts*, Virginia Woolf's final work. This novel not only exploits the three levels of realism that I have just described but attains biological emphasis in an obvious (and for this author to be obvious is something!) and easily understood manner.

The picture of the group of people with whom Mrs. Woolf deals is composed, we may say roughly, of physical detail 50 per cent, of psychological detail 40 per cent, and of biological detail 10 per cent. The appearances of the country manor where the action occurs, of the house, trees, fishpond, fields, sky, flowers, insects, shadows, reflections of sunset, sounds distant and near, are painted in with sharpness of observation and deftness of poetic imagery surpassed by no writer of her time. ("On the water-pavement spiders printed their delicate feet.") The psychology of her

characters is presented by sketching in their social past (by means of the play within the story), by illuminating glimpses into their individual pasts, and by flashes of the stream of consciousness of the characters which is so subtly interwoven into their speech and actions that it is difficult at times to tell whether they are talking to others or to themselves. The biological view of her people, their significance as mere items in the vast pageant of living creatures, is ingeniously managed by having one of her characters dip occasionally into an outline of history, quote, and comment on it. The book opens with an old lady frightened a bit by reading that people were descended from "heaving, surging, writhing, barking monsters" of prehistoric times. Just before the novel's final page, the old lady once more turns to her scientific book and reads, "England was then a swamp," and continues with the age of tooth and claw. On the final page the reader is allowed to eavesdrop on a dragging, bitter, marital quarrel in an adjoining room. The main impact of this close is not the barking primeval monsters or scrapping spouses whom God hath joined together but the meaning of the two battles in juxtaposition.<sup>8</sup>

For the serious novelist the possibilities in biological realism are endless. The student of the novel who believes that all the masterpieces have been written has only to realize that this new realism has hardly been explored. No sound novel lifting the science of life into the art of life has yet appeared! And when such master-works do appear, there will rise before creative genius yet another field to conquer—the metaphysi-

<sup>7</sup> Quoted by permission of John Steinbeck and of the Viking Press, Inc.

<sup>8</sup> With the melancholy music of this book still in my ears, I believe that all one ever need know about Mrs. Woolf's walking to her death into the sea is to be found in this, her last novel.

cal view of life which will deal with the ultimates of man's destiny. The outstanding novelist today experimenting with biological materials is Aldous Huxley. In his best known and most successful work, *Point Counter Point*, we find suggested a theme for a work of biological realism which, it seems to me, if worked out with sound technique, might produce the most profound and exciting work of fiction the world has yet seen. It is this: "Life could have been so beautiful, if we could have cared to make it so."

## II. MODERN OBJECTIVITY

The modern novelist has inherited from science not only new materials but the scientist's attitude of objectivity. Objectivity, which I have defined as detachment of the author, had its beginnings in the last quarter of the last century among French writers who emulated the documentary methods of science. In our time, however, novelists, inspired chiefly by *Ulysses*, appearing in 1922, were animated less by a search for the truth than by a revolt against the moralizing Victorian novel. They solved the problem of sentimental editorializing by simply omitting all editorializing. To the extent that their subject matter was more or less obvious or had no great weight of significance or reached melodramatic levels, the rigorous detachment of these novelists of the twenties and the thirties was appropriate and impressive. The vogue for the resulting case-history, "tranche de la vie" type of fiction in time ended, and in works like *Grapes of Wrath* we seem to see a return to more subjective, and therefore more genuinely expressive, novels.

The effect of objective strivings on the style of the modern novel can be illustrated by a simple example from *Ulysses*.

Joyce opens his long narrative with these lines:

Buck Mulligan came from the stairhead, bearing a bowl of lather on which a mirror and a razor lay crossed. A yellow dressing gown, ungirded, was sustained gently behind him by the morning air. He held the bowl aloft and intoned. . . .

This is "modern writing." This scene in the premodern or Victorian manner might go something like this:

The irrepressible Buck Mulligan on a pleasant spring morning climbed to the top of the old seaside tower to shave himself. The yellow dressing gown, floating in the morning breeze, prompted him to an awareness of his likeness to a priest and, with his usual gift of mimicry, he held his lather bowl before him like a holy vessel and intoned ludicrously. . . .

The difference between the two versions is not one of length but of degrees of the author's participation in the *effects* of his own story. The participation is far greater in the second, subjective version. The first version is not without participation by the author in the scene, since the observations and writing are inescapably his. He has, however, endeavored as far as possible to confine himself to a record of his physical senses: in this case, sight, sound, and hearing. Organization of these sensations, meanings, and total impressions is missing. This the reader must manage without help. The first version, since it is devoted to characterizing detail, is more vivid; the second, since it contains labels, is clearer and has more meaning. The objective manner of writing (I must repeat this) should be used only when the action is so simple that it explains itself.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> In this principle we find, of course, the source of the difficulties of the average reader of *Ulysses*: Joyce stuck to his objective style whether the action explained itself or not.

The great contribution of the modern novelist is not new methods of plotting or, indeed, novels without plots, but rather the final overthrow of all previous cramping conventions as to subject matter, moral outlook, and fastidiousness of style. Today it may be told. Today's clergy, professors, and lawmakers no longer legislate ideals for the making of novels. The greatest of literary arts is now in the hands of its readers and authors and publishers. The great tradition of the sentimental novel which endured throughout its three hundred years of history has, after a prolonged struggle for a generation between the old and the new, been at last finally broken.

The outstanding achievements of modern novelists to date have been

largely negative: gleefully, crudely, often blindly and morbidly, they have substituted sewers for sentiment just to show it could be done. These novels have started a new tradition, if not a new technique—but they have only started it. The novel is still in its infancy. The masters of the novel in the generation just ahead will discover themselves as they discover the best in all that has gone before; they will vibrate to the emotions of the new world that will be created, and, in giving dramatic expression to those emotions, they will carry the art of the novel to heights as yet undreamed of in any textbook. Here's hoping that something I have said in this discussion may contribute to the glories of that day.

---

The predominant fact of our time, it seems to me, is the towering place of the machine, of applied science, in short of technology, in the life of mankind. And the great issue of our time, with which you and your generation will be at grips for the rest of your lives, is simply this: Are machines to control men, or are men to control machines and direct them for the glory of God and the flowering of the human spirit? . . .

We cannot master the machine in the interest of the human spirit *unless we have a faith in people*, a deep and abiding faith in human beings, in the supreme worth of life. The machine can add to the dignity and integrity of human existence only if it is deliberately used in furtherance of such a faith in people. Which is but another way of saying that technology must have a moral and ethical purpose. The responsibility for the purpose and direction of technology may safely be entrusted only to those who have this faith in people, to whom the interests of human beings come first. . . .

Technology must have a soul; it must have behind it the primary driving force of human affairs, the spirit of man; otherwise the machine will march us, as its prisoners, from one catastrophe to another, from one war to another, each more horrible and mechanically perfect than its predecessor, from the exploitation and devastation of natural resources in one region after another—until we reach the final catastrophe, the utter exhaustion of man's spirit.—DAVID E. LILIENTHAL, chairman of the Tennessee Valley Authority, in "Machines and the Human Spirit," a commencement address given at Radcliffe College, printed in the *Radcliffe Quarterly*.



## Robert Frost: A Time To Listen

REGINALD L. COOK<sup>1</sup>

WHAT Henry James said of Ivan Turgenev is certainly true of Robert Frost. "He was the richest, the most delightful, of talkers, and his face, his person, his temper, the thoroughness with which he had been equipped for human intercourse, make in the memory of his friends, an image which is completed, but not thrown into the shade, by his literary distinction." Frost belongs with the interesting talkers; not, perhaps, like a Coleridge whose monologues were said to ascend, in De Quincey's description, "like Jacob's ladder, by just gradations, into the Heaven of Heavens and the thrones of the Trinity." Nor yet like Swinburne, whose spell-binding talk, the much-moved Henry Adams described as a "wild Walpurgis-night." His talk is not pyrotechnic or febrile. It does not shoot up in rocket-like exclamations or break into withering diatribes. On the contrary, it is social and genial and expansive. There are few unintended pauses in it. One thought starts another, and he rambles on while the deep-set blue eyes, the blunt nose, the full and expressive lips, the formidable chin, and the shock of rumpled white hair all help to pin a point down.

One reason why he talks so well is because his big frame is perfectly relaxed. He possesses the harmonious physical and mental co-ordination of a natural athlete whose poise is the result of relaxation. As his body relaxes, his mind flexes. Inward restraint counterpoises outer en-

thusiasm and inner enthusiasm counterbalances outer restraint. When asked how he has been able to get so much done, he explains: "My laziness protects me." And he elaborates further in one of his poems:

The hand that knows his business won't be told  
To do work better or faster—those two things.

The total force of the man comes to focus in the voice. The chiding smile, the deprecating thrust of head or hand, the oblique glance, the pat on the knee to tap home a roguish aside or teasing bit of banter or a good-humored quip—all reinforce the voice which is so much a part of his personality. His voice, sauntering along at an unhurried clip, expresses an amiable and sensitive personality in an idiom that is more colloquial than urbane. One night we were in the kitchen of his farmhouse in South Shaftsbury, Vermont, and he read from the little blue-bound books in which he puts his new poems. It had been a day of drizzling rain, and mist still hovered in the bottom lands. He tilted his chair against the enamel sink, the fire untended, dying, and read "The Leaf-treader," "Departmental," "The Vindictives," and "The White-tailed Hornet." Outside a pheasant squawked several times, and it was in this setting that I heard the rise and fall of that tone-sensitive voice. It is one of the easiest voices to listen to I ever heard.

He is also one of the easiest persons with whom to talk that I have ever known. It is true, as a friend of mine says

<sup>1</sup> Professor of American literature, Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vt.



in idiom, "he'll stay there talking until the last dog is dead." But what he says is good listening. "I have an endless resourcefulness to change my ground," he says, and it is this endless resourcefulness which animates the talk. Now he is talking about glass shirts, soon it will be water witches or dowsers, and there will be no end to the surprise topics. Much of what he is saying deserves to be remembered. When Emerson hiked with Ellery Channing, he wished for a stenographic press in his pocket to save Channing's commentary; so I have many times while listening to Frost wished for one in my pocket. Good talk is rarer than is commonly supposed. The talker's art is a gift like the poet's imaginative insight. I suspect that a good many people would agree that what William Rawley had to say about Bacon would also be true of Frost. "And I have known some," says Rawley, "of no mean Parts, that have professed to make use of their Note-Books, when they have risen from his table."

In the range of his talk what he has to say about the writing of poems is memorable. Poetry has been one of the really important things to him. He has given all he had to give to the writing of it. Once he described to me the time when he thought he had first caught what he was after. It was in the lines from "My Butterfly":

The gray grass is scarce dappled with the snow;  
Its two banks have not shut upon the river.

And he described the feeling he had when he knew that he had come through in those lines. "It's a funny thing," he said with intense feeling in his voice, "like tears inside."

For twenty years I have listened to Frost and from these talks gathered a kind of *ars poetica*. When I asked him

once if a poem originated in an intuitive impulse, he shrugged off the word "intuitive" as apparently esoteric. He did not approve of ascribing mystifying terms to the writing of poems. When he has a good co-ordination of body, mind, and spirit—an optimum condition certainly—he feels what he describes as "a funny sort of command" over words; "a nice kind of summons." In these moods the poem gets started and develops from "ecstasy at some surprise in the mind." He gets a "clue" and is drawn on by what he calls "a gatherer."

Once he explained the genesis of the poem "Departmental." "How did you come to write it?" I inquired.

"You mean what it *rides* on?" And, without awaiting a reply, he continued: "A *queer* feeling or mood toward something, and then fulfils it." By *it* he means, of course, the mood toward something. While he was living at Key West in the winter of 1935, the sight of an ant and a moth on a table suggested the basic idea already latent in his mind, and being in a responsive mood he started his poem and went through with it. In his manuscript copy there were crossed-out lines and interlineations; but he had carried it through to its "triumphal intention." The greatest satisfaction comes, he feels, when you can say: "Here is a poem that is a triumphal intention, that bore right through and dismissed itself." The "triumphal intention" is the source of his delight: it is the consummation of "the pure emergence [of the poem] from the logic of the thing." But "the pure emergence" is not necessarily in a straight line; it is more like following stepping-stones across a field in a kind of straight-crookedness. What is memorable in the writing is the "resolved perplexity." There is so much more suspense in perplexity than in preconceived ends.

Can he fetch it off? Can he resolve it? "Aye, there's the leverage!"

In the making of form his organic method is diametrically the opposite of Poe's method as illustrated in "The Philosophy of Composition." He considers the prepared and outlined piece of art suspect. "If it is thought out first and expressed last, I dismiss it," he says with finality. He does not write with the end in mind and then attempt to make things fit it. Instead, he proceeds, in Benjamin Franklin's words, "regularly from things known to things unknown, distinctly and clearly without confusion." After the poem finds its direction in the first line, it rides on its own impulse. "Like a piece of ice on a hot stove, the poem must ride on its own melting," he says. He does not try to wrench out the significance of the experience inherent in the poetic impulse; he tries only to release it. From its origin in the mood, which committed the poet, until the final line is set down, the poem unfolds organically, like a leaf from a bud.

He does not keep a notebook; he deprecates keeping one. The tendency for the writer with a notebook is to put down his thought finished or unfinished, and there it is. Frost depends upon memory and recall. The only freedom, as he says, is the freedom of his materials, and he realizes this freedom by apt recalls from past experience. And to make sure that he does not always turn backward, he welcomes enough of the new to freshen, not to stifle, his thought. If what attracts his attention has any real significance, he believes that it will stay in his mind, and by turning to it now and then he can develop it further. Part of the pleasure of lecturing or conversing or writing is to take up one of these unfinished thoughts and unfold it a little further. It provides the elements of sur-

prise and freshness to the audience as much as to the poet. Apparently for him to write is to finish a thought and, in the main, he prefers to keep unfolding these thoughts rather than prematurely closing them. Some have been growing since he was a very young man.

He has counseled "build soil," and I think he follows his own line of thought. He has turned thought back and back again, until the tilth of him is "sweating-full" and "drips" poetry and wisdom. The poems he writes are really produced from observed data that may go ten or twenty or more years deep in his life. He tells how Wilfred Wilson Gibson, whom he had known in England, used to search every nook and cranny for poetic materials. This has not been the way he has worked. He has not set out deliberately to write about this or that; he has not "worked up" something to write about. His sharp eyes have picked up the things which his unhurried mind has absorbed at leisure. And he has been content to wait patiently for experience to settle. In consequence his poems have not been the product of superficial retinal glances. They have been the product of the longest meditation he could give them. He has written only under a compelling and controlled impulse. Until the composing mood came, he has been well satisfied to gloat "on things of this world."

One estimates the success of Frost's organic method by the tenacity with which he clings to the coattails of his inspiration. To insure a successful outcome, there must be no letting-go but a steady holding-on. It is a dauntless and an exhilarating method and has, among other advantages, the one of suspense or surprise. Intense is the suspense as the poet follows through to a dimly perceived but ultimate fulfilment of his expression. "The best of a poem," he says, "is when

you first make it, the curve that it takes, the shape, the run, the flow, and then you can come back to it."

In form a poem is a limited number of sentences. These sentences lie in the poem like a little set of boxes in a Japanese puzzle-box. The limitation in the number of sentences gives the poem an advantage over any other literary form. He prefers the compactness of integrated sentences to the diffusiveness of Walt Whitman and the free-verse writers. He remarks satirically, "We used to say that the beauty of poetry was that it helped you to remember it. Free verse is better; you can remake it." And even more sharply he says, "Writing free verse is like playing tennis with the net down."

The source of the poetic sentences consists in seeing likenesses in life which are brought together through metaphor. "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," he says, is the product of several thoughts brought together. Different lines represent different time intervals in his life. The opposite of what he really believes about metaphor comes out in the following ironical blast at the contemporary obscurantists: "It has been lately found that it is harder to make a disconnection than a connection. The universe is not a continuity; it is a discontinuity. When you write a poem, your first object ought to be to put something into it that nobody can connect with anything else. When you have done that, you have elation. You used to get your fun out of the expression of a poem. The new-fashioned way is to enjoy the theory on which it is written."

These sentences that the poet uses are very important. An effective sentence must have the quality of memorableness, for it should be "a thing caught whole by the ear as spoken." To write a poem is to

go "a-sentencing," and what he likes is "the singing of the sentences into the form." The following eleven lines from "Happiness Makes Up in Height for What It Lacks in Length" illustrates what he means by a poetic sentence.

Oh, stormy stormy world,  
The days you were not swirled  
Around with mist and cloud,  
Or wrapped as in a shroud,  
And the sun's brilliant ball  
Was not in part or all  
Obscured from mortal view—  
Were days so very few  
I can but wonder whence  
I get the lasting sense  
Of so much warmth and light.

He thinks that the worst thing you can feel about a poem is that the sentences have been stretched or squeezed, and the worst is to squeeze them. He prefers the natural, cursive quality and the easy flow in Shakespeare to the "hot, tight, and cramped" sonnets of Rossetti. He tries to find the point of balance between sluggishness where, as he says, things "creak," and glibness, where one says more than should properly be said. The poet should never squeeze or cheat or do violence to the sentence. Nor should he alter it from what it should be by nature. The trouble with the poet, like the average human being, is that he indulges a tendency to be sweet to himself. For the poet the only hope is to divest himself of the last ego. He is too frequently the victim of self-deception and likes to believe that what he does is just right. Addressing these self-deceivers, Frost says, "You've got to get the self-love out of a poem and transform the love into a bleak honesty."

Each poetic sentence does double duty. It "conveys one meaning by word and syntax, another by the tone of voice it indicates. In irony, the tone indicated contradicts the words." Thus a poem is



"saying one thing and meaning another—a form of honest duplicity." Most writers have just one tone—a tone of statement. Others try to vary this tone by lengthening or shortening the poetic sentences. Frost has, however, varied this tone by using dramatic images of speech. A dramatic image of speech is simply the precise tone of voice by which the meaning in the words is communicated. He adheres to the regular metrical patterns, but he varies the regularity by the "tones of voice." These voice-tones are to be taken not as dialect but as accent. Words he calls "a kind of notation and writing-down of the voice," and he associates the origin of style with the "observing ear." It is "picked up," he says, "by the observing ear." He defines it as "the texture of the tones of the speaking voice. One has it as a visitation."

A poem is not only a set or assortment of poetic sentences; it is also a set or assortment of dramatic images of speech. For example, the following stanza from Christina Rossetti's "Uphill" contains dramatic images of speech:

Does the road wind uphill all the way?  
Yes, to the very end.  
Will the day's journey take the whole long day?  
From morn to night, my friend.

And the following quotation from his own "Blueberries" contains a very successful dramatic image in the last sentence.

There had been some berries—but those were  
all gone.  
He didn't say where they had been. He went on:  
I'm sure—I'm sure—as polite as could be.

A real intensity inheres in the dramatic expression which would vary twenty end-stop lines. When the poet succeeds in varying the tones of the phrases, the poem grows intense with dramatic ex-

pression. The height of poetry consists in the dramatic give-and-take. Drama, he believes, is the capstone of poetry. In the lyric the dramatic give-and-take is within one's self and not between two people, as in the dramatic dialogue. Because of the voice-tones in his poems, he calls them "talk-songs." And he says of himself, "I am on one of the scales between two things—intoning and talking. I bear a little more toward talking."

To my inquiry as to how he tests a new poem, he replied that, first, he must have a right kind of feeling about it—a kind of feeling that what he writes is good. He must feel "in form" like a baseball pitcher. Second, he appraises the poem critically in order to make sure that he is not being too nice to himself. He sets the poem against all he knows—against the masters, technique, experience, to make sure that it is all right. The poem must be interesting, but the poet must be careful about being too interested in himself. "We are more interesting to ourselves than we have a right to be," he explained. The two characteristics in writing that he stresses are interest and accuracy, and the latter especially in the use of words. Two qualities of a good poem are honesty and integrity; its tests are brilliance (in the sense of originality) and validity (in the sense of strong as opposed to the invalid). The height of the great poet is his performance, and in great poetry there is something of the quality of ice forming where the crystals ramify in beautiful patterns. That is to say, the performance consists in blending beautiful lines and thoughts.

Robert Frost's talk, like his poetry, is the crystallization of what in himself he essentially is—a wise, neighborly man, rooted and seasoned in New England soil and climate, who possesses the two most cherishable gifts of a writer: crea-



tive thought and a personal idiom. It will be a long time before the determined tone of his voice fades from earshot when he says: "I like clarification of idea; I like to see the issues drawn," or "I stand against arrogance of the rights of the law," or when he says in a tone of quiet certainty, "What I like to see is nobility."

Like Emerson, he speaks the thought that suggests itself and, like Thoreau, he listens behind him for his wit, and thus shows new proportions to the problem and sets the inquirer thinking anew. A rare, uninhibited talker is this poet, who, like Socrates, lightens a peripatetic talk with extempore flashes of responsive wit.

Plato saw that the fate of any political scheme depended on the character of those who worked it, that characters were not born but made, and that they are made through education; but only through an education which leads up to the vision that he called the Idea of the Good and which is never far from it.

May not the lack of any modern counterpart to such a vision explain the restricted influence of universities on the age? In one sense, of course, their influence is obvious and immense. In their capacity of discoverers and organisers of knowledge they have brought our civilisation into being and it cannot exist without them. But having given birth to it, they desert their child. Its gravest problem is moral, spiritual; and what effect has the university on the spiritual and moral life of the world, or even on its political life so far as this is determined by spiritual and moral forces? . . . We have the spectacle of the democratic peoples, clinging to the traditions and memories of a nobler view of life and fighting heroically for values which they dimly discern but cannot formulate into a clear rational ideal. The universities do not help them. If it is too much to expect the universities to formulate such an ideal, they might at least have sent out men who would have done it, given the guidance for which the world is looking, and led it not only in economics and sociology, in physics and chemistry, but in even more important things. They have not done so. They do not regard spiritual ideals, except the ideal of knowledge, as their business; ultimate ends are not their concern; they provide the tools of civilisation but give no guidance for their use. What Plato calls 'the knowledge of good and evil' is almost omitted from the education which they give, and is omitted more and more, as we tend to suppose that economics and sociology give the only training needed by administrators and statesmen.—SIR RICHARD LIVINGSTONE, *Plato and Modern Education* (New York, 1944). By permission of the Macmillan Co. publishers.

## *Scholars or Gentlemen?*

R. M. WEAVER<sup>1</sup>

ONE of the persistent problems in American cultural history is the comparative absence of belles-lettres in the Old South. It is anomalous that a section which had developed a number of rather complex cultural patterns, which usually showed a certain taste in selection, and which considered itself the more civilized portion of the country, should have been indifferent, not to say hostile, to the cultivation of the arts. Several theories have been adduced to explain this condition: the South was primitive; it had no cities to serve as centers of activity; the climate was too hot to permit sustained effort; the men were too busy with politics to find time for literature. Without denying some measure of effect to each of these, I should like to mention a factor which I believe to have been of decisive influence in discouraging the professional *littérateur*: the Old South was developing a Spartan strain in its civilization, which led to a distrust, on principle, of the artist and the thinker. Basil Gildersleeve once drew a parallel between the American Civil War and the Peloponnesian War, placing the North in the role of Athens and the South in that of Sparta. His analogy can be extended; the South was Sparta not only in its position as combatant but also in its depreciation of the intellectual and commercial pursuits which thrived at Athens.

It is well at the beginning to arrive at a clear notion of the southern social order. Despite the efforts of some modern re-

searchers to prove that there was no aristocracy in the South or that the aristocracy was of negligible importance, it is one of the most obvious facts of the American past that the basic social organization of the Old South was aristocratic. The presence of Negro slavery made it inevitable that this should be so. The aristocrats were not numerous, and they never succeeded in perfecting themselves like the European orders with long heritages behind them, but they were the leaders of the community, and those who aspired to rise in the social scale strove to be like them.

These aristocrats were destined never to enjoy the kind of stable condition which allows such a group to become a patron of the arts. From the time of their arrival they were engaged in battles—against the Indians, against the wilderness, against the mother-country. Hardly had rest from these troubles come, when the South saw slavery, the foundation stone of the plantation economy, threatened by a world-wide humanitarian movement; and from then on it looked forward to internecine war. It should not be remarkable, therefore, that the southern populace learned to revere the politician and the soldier and to look with positive disfavor on those employments which unfitted a man for the business of governing and fighting.

The plantation-owner might collect a fine library, and he might read Scott and Byron with pleasure, or even look into the Latin poets, but he was proud that his knowledge was that of an ama-

<sup>1</sup> Instructor in English, the College of the University of Chicago.

teur. Indeed, all southern education rested on the classical assumption that specialization of any kind is illiberal in a freeman. King Philip's famous taunt to his son Alexander, who had performed skilfully upon the flute—"Are you not ashamed, son, to play so well?"—would not have required elucidation for the ante bellum southerner. Plutarch explains this attitude by declaring that "he who busies himself with mean occupations produces, in the very pains he takes about things of little or no use, an evidence against himself of his negligence and indisposition to what is really good." The southern theory of education, which can be traced to Aristotle by way of the Elizabethans, aimed not at any special proficiency but at "a catholicity of taste as well as of feeling, and an elevated view of all subjects, particularly public affairs." It was training for the gentleman-ruler, whose position in society would entitle him to look down upon any kind of specialization as *déclassé*. As early as 1699 a youthful orator at the College of William and Mary was sounding the southern distrust of the scholar type:

For in such a retired corner of the world, far from business and action, if we make scholars, they are in danger of proving mere scholars, which make a very ridiculous figure, being made up of pedantry, disputatiousness, positiveness, and a great many other ill qualities, which render them not fit for action and conversation.

John Randolph of Roanoke, who typifies so much that was good and bad in the southern aristocracy, sneered at professors and at those whose "great learning, combined with inveterate professional habits," leaves them "disqualified for any but secondary roles anywhere."

These sentiments go reverberating down the years of southern history; and wherever we find a group of free spirits

eager to promote some artistic or literary venture, we hear them complaining of the excessive attention given to politicians and men of affairs. The career of the *Southern Literary Messenger* is in itself a lesson in the struggle to win the southern mind from its Spartan addiction to politics and war. In its first issue the editor pointed out:

It is folly to boast of political ascendancy, of moral influence, of professional eminence, or unrivalled oratory, when in all the Corinthian graces which adorn the structure of the mind we are lamentably deficient. It is worse than folly to talk of "this ancient and unterrified commonwealth"—if we suffer ourselves to be terrified at the idea of supporting one poor periodical, devoted to letters and mental improvement.

A list of letters saluting the first appearance of the *Messenger* reflects the frustration of those who had been wishing for literary activity in the South. Said one correspondent:

With these sentiments you may be assured that I wish success to your endeavor to rouse the spirit of the South in the cause of literature; to draw its intellectual energies from the everlasting monotonous discussion of politics, which has run the same round of arguments and topics for forty years, and allure her favored sons and daughters to the kinder and brighter fields of science and letters.

Another expressed to the editor his fear that

you may meet with some inaptitude or distaste to mere literary contribution from the educated of our citizens. This, however, cannot last long; you may feel it at the outset, but it will soon end; for I doubt not that the *Messenger*, as one of its best effects, will draw into literary exercise the talents which now lie fallow throughout the community, or which have long extravasated in politics or professions.

A third wrote enthusiastically:

If the object of your labors be attained, of which there can be no reasonable doubt, posterity will be more grateful to you than to thousands of political *exquisites* of the day,



whose memory will last only so long as their ephemeral productions.

Despite some outward success, it is plain that the *Messenger* had to contend with much apathy and indifference in its regional constituency. Thus in 1843, nine years after the hopeful beginning just described, one finds the editor exclaiming: "How glad to us will be the day, when an ardent love of liberal learning shall have supplanted some of the hobbies of Southern intellect, have roused its slumbering energies and imparted a taste for purest joys and sweetest solaces." By 1857 it appeared that some progress had been made against the universal preoccupation with politics, and the editor could exult in the newfound glory of authors:

The literary men are regarded with greater consideration than formerly, and are not now compelled to walk under the huge legs of politicians and peep about to find themselves dishonorable graves. It is getting to be thought that a man may, perhaps, accomplish as much for the South by writing a good book as by making a successful stump speech; and he who contributes to the enjoyment of his fellow citizens by a lofty poem or shapes their convictions by a powerful essay is not an idle dreamer merely and that the pen devoted to the treatment of subjects out of the range of political and commercial activities is as usefully employed as the tongue which is exercised in the wearisome declamation of legislative halls.

Such expectations, however, were soon mocked. Two years later, in connection with a pointless debate then going on in Charleston over whether William Gilmore Simms could write good English prose, there appeared this characteristic note of exasperation: "When will the people of the South learn to know and honour their worthiest literary men?"

We may now ask what the writers themselves thought of their situation. One of the first to deplore the strong

anti-intellectual prejudice was John Pendleton Kennedy, who in a letter dated May 1, 1835, wrote to Washington Irving: "You have convinced our wise ones at home that a man may sometimes write a volume without losing his character." Philip Pendleton Cooke, circumstanced as few were in his time to court the literary muse, had the following illuminating incident to report:

What do you think of a good friend of mine, a most valuable and worthy, and hard-riding one, saying gravely to me a short time ago: "I wouldn't waste time on a damn thing like poetry; you might make yourself, with all your sense and judgment, a useful man in settling neighborhood disputes and difficulties."

There is evidence that Cooke himself became to some extent tinctured with the same attitude. Literature he regarded as an occupation for the middle years; after that, age and gravity called for statecraft. He wrote to a friend:

My literary life opens now. If the world manifest any disposition to hear my "utterances," it will be abundantly gratified. I am thirty: until I am forty literature shall be my calling—avoiding however to rely upon it pecuniarily—then (after forty) politics will be a sequitur.

Few were made more unhappy by the lack of understanding and appreciation facing the southern man of letters than Paul Hamilton Hayne. It appeared to him a "species of ignorance . . . invincibly blind and presumptuous." In a letter written to Margaret J. Preston shortly after the war he made the following bitter observation: "Touching the *Southern Public*, and those who from places of practical trust & toil lead,—generally its opinions,—we *artists*—may as well make up our minds to receive nothing—unless it be contumely, and a thinly veiled contempt."

The career of William Gilmore Simms



is instructive in the fascination which the southern social order exercised upon men of strong and independent mind, even while it tormented them with frustration. Simms was the nearest approach to the professional man of letters in the ante bellum South, if we leave out the doubtful case of Edgar Allan Poe. Born outside the aristocratic class, he made a determined effort to gain entry into it by means of his pen; and if indefatigable industry and allegiance to the principles of his society had been measures of success, he would have gone to the top. For several years he deserted romance, in which his achievement had been best recognized, to attempt biography, history, and oratory, securing with his "The Morals of Slavery" a place alongside Governor Hammond and Chancellor Harper in *Pro-slavery Arguments*. He assumed the unrewarding editorship of the *Southern Quarterly Review* with the object of giving the South an organ comparable with New England's *North American Review*. But it was not to be; his considerable exertions in defense of the southern feudal order did not get him admitted to the magic circle; he discovered that in this milieu, proficiency in letters, even loyal service to the regime, was no substitute for political success or hereditary standing. In Charleston, if anywhere, aristocratic disdain for the mere man of letters was decisive, and no conceivable fame in the field of his choice would have been weighed in the scale with the successes of others in camp and senate. Although by some miracle of affection Simms remained a loyal Charlestonian to the end, he could not refrain in moments of despondency from admitting that celebrated city's indifference to his work. On October 30, 1858, he wrote in a personal memorandum:

Thirty odd years have passed, and I can now mournfully say that the old man [his father] was right. All that I have ever done has been poured to waste in Charleston, which has never smiled on any of my labors, which has steadily ignored my claims, which has disparaged me to the last, has been the last place to give me its adhesion, to which I owe no favors never having received an office, or a compliment, or a dollar at her hands; and, with the exception of some dozen of her citizens, who have been kind to me, and some scores of her young men, who have honored me with loving sympathy and something like reverence, which has always treated me like a public enemy to be sneered at than a dutiful son doing her honor.

The bitter epitaph which he composed for himself "Here lies one who, after a reasonably long life, distinguished chiefly by unceasing labors, has left all his better work undone"—is a poignant testimony of defeat. The tragedy of Simms's career was that he expected something which this society was simply not prepared to give, and in the struggle he sacrificed too much. As compromises are often fatal, there is little doubt that the concessions he was compelled to make to be effective as a man account for his relative mediocrity as poet and romancer.

Richard Henry Wilde, whose delicate faculty gave the world "My Life Is like the Summer Rose," chose to leave the scene of politics and cotton-raising to lose himself amid the art and dreams of medieval Italy. How this act impressed a sober mind of the day may be seen in a few excerpts from Stephen G. Miller's *Bench and Bar of Georgia* (1858):

The mission to which Mr. Wilde addressed his faculties and gave years of toil in Europe was not in harmony with his relative duties to mankind and with that position which his eminent talents and finished cultivation had secured from the world. He was qualified for extensive practical usefulness as a jurist, scholar, and statesman. . . . In Europe there was delight to the senses, but mildew to the

heart. The voluptuary, the man of fashion, the idler were gratified; but the moral hero, the public benefactor, the man of enterprise, the scholar of a just ambition, desirous to leave a record of popular utility, would turn with generous self-denial from such enchantments.

The author could not understand how Wilde could devote years to the study of Tasso, "to the sentimental details, to the fantasies of insanity, and that, too, not for the benefit of medical jurisprudence." In short:

The task, with whatever success performed by Mr. Wilde, was below the merit which should have sustained itself in a better field,—at the forum, in the walks of political economy, in commerce, in constitutional law, or in the analysis of government, all of which admitted the classic beauties of style.

There is a long list of southern writers, less sensitive to the claims of pure art, who turned without apparent reluctance from an early period of creativeness to engage in practical affairs. William Wirt, whose *Letters of a British Spy* and *The Old Bachelor* reveal a talent for the genial essay, became attorney-general of the United States and gave to office that energy which might have made him conspicuous in letters, as his contemporary biographer noted. John Pendleton Kennedy himself, whose *Swallow Barn* is hardly surpassed in charm and deftness by the best of Irving, closed his life as a complacent functionary and businessman. Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, who with *Georgia Scenes* began the rich tradition of frontier humor, later spoke apologetically of his work as a mere bagatelle and soothed his conscience by hoping that it would one day be valuable as history. Having gained place and respectability, he wrote learnedly on the biblical justification of slavery. Joseph Glover Baldwin followed up *The Flush Times of Alabama and Mississippi*, one of the inimitable works of American humor, not

with more writing of the imaginative kind, which the popularity of this volume should have encouraged, but with a series of political portraits of such men as Jefferson, Hamilton, and Clay. Nathaniel Beverley Tucker after writing *George Balcombe*, a novel described by Poe as the best which America had to that time produced, gave his time to political treatises. So the story goes until Appomattox and after.

Beyond a doubt this tendency to denigrate the work of the artist was increased by conditions leading toward civil war, but it was there all the while, deep-seated and conscious of itself. There are two grounds for the hostility with which an aristocracy may regard the thinker. The first is that his work necessarily leads to refinements of sensibility which leave a man unsuited to the brutish business of fighting. Wherever war and statecraft are held the chief offices of man, preoccupation with an art will be looked upon as a sentimental weakness. In the South this hostility was the contempt of a chauvinistic, military caste for those employments—commercial as well as intellectual, it should be emphasized—which demoralize the warrior. Its classic expression is Hotspur's retort:

I'd rather be a kitten and cry mew  
Than one of these same metre ballad mongers.

The second is that an aristocracy distrusts the intellectual because it wishes to minimize the conflicts in the established order. To make its position secure, it wants a general sanction; it does not want a troublesome debate which might lead to disturbances. The intellectual and the artist, if they are disinterested in their reflections, upset the men of secure position by pointing to unwelcome essences.

The southern people have always

prided themselves on being a pre-eminently sound, outdoor, unbookish people, never tormented by Hamlet's self-questioning because they accepted a few simple truths and refused to go in for sophisticated doctrines. It is not without significance that in the great journalistic battle preceding the Civil War, New England was constantly reviled in the southern press as the "land of notions." Southerners were proud of the fact that they were not bothered by ideological conflicts, just as they were of the fact that their wealth did not come by shop-keeping. One of the frankest statements of this point of view may be found in the *New Eclectic*, a southern journal published in Baltimore after the war. In attacking an English writer who had spoken critically of the South, the editor could declare:

He was in search of *isms*, of which happily we have none. He was tracing the development of what in New England are called "ideas"—things which the healthy nature of our people

loathes, and which we exorcise with bell, book, and candle, as we would the Devil from whom they come. Our faults, shortcomings, vices if you will, have at least this redeeming feature, that they are natural. Our moral distempers are those of a constitution naturally sound and vigorous.

It is the judgment of history that the chief fault of the Old South was complacency. It was provincial and it was becoming isolationist; it was indifferent about learning from the great world; and it was satisfied with second-rate achievements in all else as long as it could lead in the spectacular theaters of war and politics. It would cherish learning and the arts if they proved ornamental, but the actual work of creation, like the manufacture of the elegant things which went into its mansions, it preferred to have done elsewhere. A scholar must scorn delights and live laborious days. In the Old South a man could be a gentleman or a scholar, but he could not, except in a superficial sense, be both.

---

A new era is upon us. Even the lesson of victory itself brings with it profound concern, both for our future security and the survival of civilization. The destructiveness of the war potential, through progressive advances in scientific discovery, has in fact, now reached a point which revises the traditional concept of war. . . .

The problem basically is theological and involves a spiritual recrudescence and improvement of human character that will synchronize with our almost matchless advance in science, art, literature, and all material and cultural development of the last two thousand years. It must be of the spirit if we are to save the flesh.—GENERAL DOUGLAS MACARTHUR, remarks at the surrender ceremony in Tokyo Bay.

## *The Marvelous Child of the English Stage*

RICHARD D. ALTICK<sup>1</sup>

THE Young Roscius is a legend rather than a sober fact of English theatrical history. He certainly lived and played, as all the books and memorabilia in theatrical collections assure us; and the extraordinary furor his performance created in England in 1804 and 1805 is amply attested to by scores of contemporary accounts. Yet about his whole career there remains a delightful air of improbability. How could a beardless boy, playing tragic and heroic adult roles in the standard repertoire of the time, have led many ordinarily judicious critics to declare that he surpassed Garrick and Kemble? How could he have so captivated London that for a season he was the cause of riots in the street, the adored dinner guest at princes' tables, the sought-after subject of the most fashionable painters, and the unceasing topic of excited conversation in circles both high and low? As the years go by, the mystery deepens. But the facts of the Young Roscius mania persist, to provide the curious with one of the most startling episodes in the annals of the English stage.

Unlike the story of so many prodigies, that of the Young Roscius contains no father greedy for riches not of his own earning, no mother of limitless ambitions and vanity pushing a reluctant child before the footlights; nor does it contain any scene, such as Hogarth painted, of strolling players dressing in the squalor of a provincial barn. The Young Roscius,

William Henry West Betty, was the son of an Irish gentleman who had inherited a fortune from his father and of a Shropshire lady said to have been "of rare accomplishments." The comfortable parents undertook to educate their son themselves, and in the course of this laudable endeavor they taught him Wolsey's speech from *Henry VIII*. The boy was so entranced by the sound of his own voice declaiming blank verse that elocution henceforth had to be included among his studies.

When he was still very young, Betty's parents moved from Shrewsbury, where he had been born, to Ireland, where his father had a farm and a linen factory. In 1801, when he was ten, he was taken to Belfast to see Mrs. Siddons starring in Sheridan's *Pizarro*, one of the numerous English adaptations that had lately been made of Kotzebue's *Die Spanier in Peru oder Rollas Tod*. Emerging from the theater that night, Betty sealed his own fate. In words that three years later, thanks to the press agents, would be on the lips of thousands of London theatergoers, the boy declared with terrible resoluteness that if he were not allowed to become an actor, he would surely die.

Many other boys have said the same thing at one time or another, but few have had the fortune to be indulged as Betty was. His parents hired a dramatic coach named Hough, the prompter at the Belfast theater, who soon had the boy committing whole roles to memory. Then nothing would stop him. One can envision the anxious parental confer-

<sup>1</sup> Assistant professor of English, Ohio State University.



ences that took place in the farmstead in County Down. The disrepute in which actors were held by decent people, the uncertainties and discomforts of theatrical life, the possibility that this burst of enthusiasm and talent would be short-lived, were weighed against the boy's feverish monomania; against the assurances of his coach, who was deeply experienced in stage matters, that here, in neat knee breeches, was the coming English Roscius; and, of course, against the undeniable pride of parenthood. The upshot of it all was that in Belfast, on August 19, 1803, young Betty stepped before a packed house to play the role of Osman in an English version of Voltaire's *Zaire*. When he made his last exit that night, he had become the toast of Belfast.

All through that autumn and winter Betty, who was now being spoken of in the public prints as "the Young [or Infant] Roscius," played to jammed houses in Belfast, Dublin, and Cork. In the spring of 1804 he moved to Glasgow for fourteen nights of wild applause. At Edinburgh he calmly submitted to the grave scrutiny of the dignitaries of the church and the university and of the lords of the Court of Session; and these august critics, whose very names struck terror into the hearts of actors they had damned in other seasons, fought among themselves for the honor of presenting gifts to the astonishing boy. There is a tale, repeated in virtually every account of Betty from his day to our own, of a cantankerous Edinburgh critic publicly refusing to be converted to Bettyism, and then, more sensible of his personal peril than he had been of the Infant Roscius' supreme genius, absenting himself from the city until the storm of popular indignation blew over. It is the sort of story that is manna to any press agent,

and one cannot resist the suspicion that it was fabricated by a member of the tribe; in any event, it was current even before Betty proceeded to his London triumphs.

His progress continued into the English counties. In August he arrived at Birmingham, where he was managed by the father of the tragedian Macready. Everywhere along his route the houses were sold to the very limit of their capacity, and lotteries were established to determine seat-holders from among the thousands of applicants; the inns were crowded as they seldom were at market times; special coaches were operated from the outlying districts, distance being no handicap to those who had caught the contagion. It was said that the dramatist Home, on seeing the twelve-year-old boy playing Young Norval in his tragedy of *Douglas*, had declared that until that night he had never realized fully what that character meant. Master Betty, the provincial playgoers knew, had already mastered a whole repertoire of famous and difficult roles; most marvelous of all, it was said that the boy had memorized the part of Hamlet, notorious for its length, in three days. (*The Dictionary of National Biography*, itself the victim of a recrudescence of the Betty mania eighty years after the event, cuts the time down to three *hours*.) Bettyites turned to rhapsodic verse as the only means of expressing their delight. An inhabitant of Leicester, for example, wrote a long panegyric "On Seeing the Young Roscius in the Character of King Richard III," of which these lines are a fair sample:

Transcendent boy! thy genius truly rare  
Owns thee Melpomene's peculiar care;  
For thee, with skill, she'll turn th' historic page;  
For thee, in search of choicest sweets engage;  
Cull flow'rs by bright Aurora's dew-drop fed,  
To weave a well-earn'd garland for thy head;  
For thou disdain'st the voice of mimic art,

Who bidst mechanical each passion start;  
Perfection hast thou learnt in Nature's school,  
Herself thy guide, thy model, and thy rule.

London, which had been reading newspaper reports of the boy wonder ever since his Belfast debut, was now being prepared for his first metropolitan performance by a publicity campaign that would do credit to the prince of Times Square press agents, Mr. Richard Maney. Sometimes, when childish illnesses overtook the boy as he moved through the provinces, the fact would be touchingly reported in the London press. As one might expect, he was portrayed, probably with much truth, as a normal, unspoiled boy. "Off the stage," declared one writer, "his manners are puerile, as he is often seen playing at marbles in a morning, and Richard the Third in the evening." The *Morning Herald*, in November, 1804, carried this pleasant anecdote:

The Young Roscius, who is in all respects playful, lately hesitated in going on the stage when he was to perform Richard. Young, the chief Liverpool actor, told him the stage was waiting, and urged him to appear. The boy declared that, unless Young would bend his back, that he might have one jump at leap-frog, he would not appear. After some demur at this whimsical request, and some useless remonstrance, Young was obliged to submit; and the little fellow then went upon the stage, and performed his part with admirable spirit.

It was said, too, that "he has a pleasant turn for repartee, which makes his company much sought for. The Edinburgh manager expressed his fears, at first rehearsal, that his voice would not fill the house. 'My dear Sir,' replied the little hero of the buskin, 'I beg you will be under no apprehensions upon that score, for, if my voice does not fill your house, probably my playing will!'"

By such attractive teasers as these, in addition to a few discreetly arranged

public appearances of the boy in boxes at the theaters, the Londoners' curiosity was sharpened. Finally, on the first of December, 1804, the Young Roscius made his London bow. The newspaper reports of the scenes outside and inside Covent Garden pulsate with excitement. Not within the memory of living man, reported one paper, had there been "any manifestation of public anxiety" to equal that outside the theater. Shortly after noon the streets were packed with crowds so large and insistent that the military was finally called out. At five o'clock the box entrances were forced open, and the mob poured in with a rush which, according to the soberer accounts, resulted in serious injuries to many people and, according to some more imaginative ones, "ultimately cost some persons their lives." The boxes were a madhouse. Gentlemen who got to the theater too late to buy box seats and could not force their way through the corridors to the pit, worked themselves into the boxes and leaped from them into the pit, which was already crammed with spectators. Ladies who had been hardy enough to arrive intact and conscious in the lower boxes now devoted themselves to ministering to the unfortunates in the pit below them. "Upwards of twenty gentlemen, who had fainted, were dragged up into the boxes. . . . Several more raised their hands as if in the act of supplication for mercy and pity."

Finally Charles Kemble arrived before the footlights to speak a temporary address. The perspiring, bruised crowd, thinking he was about to apologize for Betty's nonappearance, hissed him off. Returning, he managed to read the address—but he was the only one to hear it. Then the play began. It was Dr. John Brown's *Barbarossa*, a tragedy

first produced in 1754, in the course of which Selim (played by Master Betty) plots vengeance against the mighty Barbarossa for the death of his father, only to fall in love with Barbarossa's beautiful daughter Irene. The first act, which did not require Betty, was run through hurriedly and inaudibly, as people continued to faint and compassionate ladies in the boxes fanned those below them in the pit. Then began the second act; and for some time before his first entrance cue the occupants of the proprietor's box could see the fabled Young Roscius nonchalantly "standing behind the scenes, and conversing quite at his ease." The cue came; the boy calmly entered, "dressed as a slave, in white pantaloons, a short, close, russet jacket, trimmed with sable, and a turban hat or cap." The house sent up a tremendous shout. But Betty, unperturbed, proceeded to business, and the play continued, though interrupted from time to time by the ungovernable enthusiasm of the spectators. At least one witness was impressed at once by his honest passion for acting: "he was doing what he loved to do, and put his whole force into it." And by the end of the evening, when the last bow had been made and exhausted Londoners staggered from Covent Garden into the cold night, Betty's place in English theatrical history was assured.

The following months saw London in an uproar over the slim boy. After twelve tumultuous nights at Covent Garden, he moved, as had been previously arranged, to the other great patent theater, Drury Lane, where his first twenty-eight nights grossed £17,210 11s., with an average nightly box office of £614 13s. The audiences were, however, somewhat larger even than these official figures indicate. Certain members of the Drury Lane orchestra made a profitable

practice of renting their places and their violins—with safely greased bows—to gay young blades, who thus were afforded front-row seats until the fraud was discovered and the management escorted the "falsetto fashionables" out the door.

Master Betty's comings and goings were minutely reported in the press; when he fell ill, regular official bulletins were issued by the staff of attending physicians. His life, brief though it was, was written scores of times. He was painted by Opie in his character of Young Norval and by Northcote as Hamlet. Pictures of the boy, however wretchedly reproduced, were in as great demand as those of Lily Langtry were to be many years later. The caricaturists busied themselves too, especially since the advent of this marvelous boy was having serious repercussions in the inner world of the theater. Rowlandson, for instance, showed him leaping over John Philip Kemble's head, in blunt allusion to the consternation that Betty's triumph had created among the adult professionals. Kemble and his sister, Mrs. Siddons, hitherto the reigning monarchs of the English stage, had discreetly taken leave of the London boards while everyone was making comparisons between the Young Roscius and the most famous adult actors in English history—to the disadvantage, of course, of the latter. It was even said that the furor over Betty had seriously affected Kemble's mind. The Duke of Clarence and his mistress, the actress Mrs. Jordan, who had long entertained a dislike for Kemble, improved the occasion by being conspicuously warm to the boy actor who was taking the great tragedian's very bread from his mouth.

Betty was dined in the houses of peers, and on one typical occasion at



Lord Abercorn's he reduced the Duchess of Devonshire to tears by a speech he was prevailed upon to recite to the company. The creator of the role of Charles Surface came out of retirement to present to Betty a seal bearing the likeness of Garrick, which Garrick, in his last illness, had given the actor to keep until the stage should again hold "a player who acted from nature and from feeling." At Cambridge competitors for the Sir William Browne prize were writing essays on the subject, "Quid noster Roscius egit." There is even a persistent story that Pitt adjourned Parliament early so that the members could attend Betty's *Hamlet*.

The Betty mania extended unabated to America, and the story of the Young Roscius' having resolved either to become an actor or to die stirred another stage-struck boy, John Howard Payne, to a similar manifesto. After some four years he realized his dream and made his debut in Betty's famous role of Young Norval. Later, during his first English tour, it was the fashion to compare him with Betty, and he was even billed as the American Roscius.

Sir Thomas Lawrence, the painter, reported to a friend less than a week after Betty's London debut that the world agreed that "young Betty was the best actor upon the stage, and far excelled all competitors of whatever age," and he himself thought Betty superior to all but Mrs. Siddons. Judging from all the stories of the excitement over the wonderful boy in this season of 1804-5, this extravagant opinion would seem to have been universal. Yet in private the individual members of the populace freely expressed their doubts. For every Charles James Fox who spoke of him as "a prodigy of excellence" there seem to have been five critics who agreed with Inigo Richards,

the secretary to the Royal Academy, that "his acting was very extraordinary, if considered as something to be seen at Westminster or Harrow Schools, but it was ridiculous to speak of it seriously as something to be compared with Garrick, Barry, &c." Edmund Malone said all his friends whose judgment he respected considered Betty "only as an extraordinary boy"; James Boswell, the younger, was said to be "moderate in his admiration." And the sixteen-year-old Byron remarked, "I think him tolerable in some characters, but by no means equal to the ridiculous praises showered upon him by John Bull." Even in the public press there was at least one voice of dissent—that of the *News*, whose newly appointed dramatic critic, a very young man named Leigh Hunt, wrote obstinately heretical criticisms of Betty's performances, articles which he maintained, many years later, had materially hastened the end of the Betty furor.

When the London theaters closed after the 1804-5 season, Betty returned to the provinces, where his London successes were duplicated. At the end of 1805 he returned to Covent Garden and Drury Lane; and here his fortunes still prospered lavishly, even if an increasingly strong suspicion of garlic could be detected in the bouquets which were tossed at him. After this season, however, the London excitement quickly abated, and the Infant Roscius was forced to retire to the provinces, where he was in great demand as a bulwark of faltering road companies. On one occasion he was engaged to save the fortunes of a company in which Edmund Kean, then an obscure troupier, was playing. Kean immediately disappeared for two days, then returned, saying he had been living in the interim on turnips and cabbages; "but I'll go again," he added, "as often



as I see myself put in such characters [as those in Betty's vehicles]. I'll not play second to any man—except to John Kemble." Finally, at Bath in March, 1808, Betty made his farewell appearance as a boy actor, and soon afterward was enrolled as fellow-commoner in Christ's College, Cambridge.

If only he had let well enough alone! But in 1812, the lure of the green room again growing unbearable, Betty returned to the stage, no longer the Infant Roscius but hopeful of becoming the adult one. But, as the painter Northcote remarked to Hazlitt, the world would never admire twice. "They had taken a surfeit of their idol, and wanted something new. Nothing he could do could astonish them so much the second time, as the youthful prodigy had done the first time; and therefore he must always appear as a foil to himself, and seem comparatively flat and insipid." Thus when Betty reappeared on the London stage, his late admirers, who had come to pray, remained to scoff. Byron found the adult Betty's acting "utterly inadequate to the London engagement. . . . His figure is fat, his features flat, his voice unmanageable, his action ungraceful." A few only remained faithful; the aging, crabbed Godwin expressed his conviction that in time Betty would become a better actor than Kemble—which was faint praise indeed, considering that in 1804 it was agreed that Betty already *was* Kemble's superior.

Betty, despite London's change of heart, was loath to withdraw from the stage, and for the next twelve years he toured the kingdom, drawing respectable audiences but exciting none of the fervor that had greeted his first appearance. He retired finally after a performance at Southampton in August, 1824, and for fifty years thereafter lived quietly and

easily on the fortune he had accumulated. Hazlitt gives us a pleasant picture of the man with whom he spent an evening reminiscing about the good old days of the stage.

I wanted to insinuate that I had been a sneaking admirer, but could not bring it in. As, however, we were putting on our great coats down stairs, I ventured to break the ice by saying, "There is one actor of that period of whom we have not made honourable mention, I mean Master Betty." "Oh!" he said, "I have forgot all that." I replied, that he might, but that I could not forget the pleasure I had had in seeing him. On which he turned off, and shaking his sides heartily, and with no measured demand upon his lungs, called out, "Oh, memory! memory!" in a way that showed he felt the full force of the allusion.

It was reported after his retirement that he freely admitted that as an actor he had been a flash in the pan, albeit a most dazzling flash. He had no illusions about his own talents: he had never equaled Kemble or Garrick, whatever the public had said in its hysteria.

What, after all, was the secret of Betty's success? The question has never ceased to be asked. The most obvious answer is the peculiar depravity of public taste at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It is significant that many of the contemporary comments on Betty qualify their superlatives with an allusion to the decadent condition of the stage in their time: the idea is, "Betty is by all odds the finest actor *now on the stage*"—the compliment is suspiciously left-handed. A paragraph from a letter which Wordsworth, in the far-off Lake District, wrote to his friend Sir George Beaumont is revealing on this point as well as indicative of the intensity of the Betty craze, affecting as it did people in remote places who seldom gave a thought to the stage:

I hope the young Roscius, if he go on as he has begun, will rescue the English theatre from

the infamy that has fallen upon it, and restore the reign of good sense and Nature. From what you have seen, Sir George, how do you think he could manage a character of Shakespeare? Neither Selim nor Douglas [i.e., Young Norval] requires much power; but even to perform them as he does talents and genius I should think must be necessary. I had very little hope, I confess, thinking it very natural that a theatre which had brought a dog upon the stage as a principal performer would catch at a wonder whatever shape it might put on.

In a theater dominated, as the popular British theater largely was in Betty's time, by acrobats, trained dogs, conjurers, and ornate spectacles à la Billy Rose (the Sadler's Wells Theatre, for instance, specialized in aquacades), a child prodigy was the next logical attraction. Yet, while the public was quite prepared to welcome a gifted child actor with frantic applause, its taste was not so degenerate that it would adore any child prodigy that happened along. A case in point is the disastrous London debut in 1805 of a little girl named Mudie, "the Young Roscia of the Dublin Stage," who at the advertised age of eight appeared at Covent Garden as the quite mature heroine in a play called *The Country Girl*. Things went well at first—she repeated the words correctly, and her stage presence was good; but she was remarkably small even for her age, and when she "came to be talked of as a wife, as a mistress, as an object of love and jealousy, the scene became so ridiculous, that loud hissing and laughing ensued." She had the further misfortune to play opposite a full-grown actress who wore a plume of ostrich feathers which made her actually seven feet tall; and the actor who played her guardian had to go on all fours to kiss her. Miss Mudie was, indeed, so small that when the action required her to be disguised as a young man, her wearing jacket and trousers seriously alarmed the audience, who

could think of safer and more appropriate garb for a child so tiny. The result was that, despite Kemble's pleas, the audience hissed the luckless heroine from the stage, and a lady of an age appropriate to the character finished the play in her stead.

Now Miss Mudie's debacle and the similar lucklessness of some scores of young wonders who followed to the London stage in Betty's train were not merely the fulfilment of the sour prophecy of Richard Cumberland, the playwright, that "we shall have a second influence of the pigmies; they will pour upon us in multitudes, innumerable as a shoal of sprats, and when at last we have nothing else but such small fry to feed upon, an epidemic nausea will take place." Although there must have been ludicrous aspects to Betty's performances in tragic roles, no one, evidently, was moved to helpless laughter by a Macbeth whose voice had not changed or a Richard II who would have looked more lifelike playing marbles. The Young Roscius, unlike his many imitators, had genuine gifts, qualities most demanded by the acting tradition of his time, which compelled audiences to take him seriously.

It must not be forgotten that in Betty's time "the Kemble religion" was still supreme: the toga-wrapping school of acting, which placed the greatest store upon the achievement of the grand effect, especially by the use of attitudes supposed to imitate the poise of classic sculpture, had not yet given way to the realistic impulse. The stage was not intended to be a mirror of life. Instead, one went to the theater to see a world above nature, in which aesthetic pleasure was to be had from the actors' declamation and posturing rather than from any illusion of reality. Thus the incongruities between Betty's actual person and the

characters he portrayed were not so painful or so important as they would later have been in a naturalistic theater. Playing to the audience of 1804, which had been bred to a thoroughly artificial school of acting, he would have been quite able to command, in Coleridge's famous phrase, the willing suspension of disbelief.

The discrepancy of age would, then, have been a relatively minor consideration. Granted that he was unsuited in stature and voice to the parts he played, he seems to have had almost every other superficial requirement for success according to the standards of his time. Witnesses agree that his fair complexion, his slender young form, and, above all, his remarkably graceful bearing made his acting pleasant to watch. Furthermore, he had an amazing talent for mimicry. He could imitate to perfection the gestures and the facial movements which he had seen in grown actors. By minutely following the lead of experienced players in his roles, he was able to counterfeit passions which he could never have felt nor even seen except upon the stage. As to his ability to create the illusion of manhood, it is to be remarked that he was always more successful with the tenderer parts than with those which required the stronger, more masculine emotions. He would have had no trouble with Romeo, nor with any part dominated by sensibility rather than by deep passion. Significantly,

several of his roles, among them Frederick in Mrs. Inchbald's *Lovers' Vows*, Young Norval in *Douglas*, and Tancred in Thomson's *Tancred and Sigismunda*, were those of long-lost sons, the pathos of whose situation was invariably deepened by wretched misfortune. In *Douglas*, for example, Norval is murdered by his mother's second husband, who has grown insanely jealous upon learning of her frequent meetings with the youth whom he suspects of being her lover. One can understand Hazlitt's comment on Betty in such a role:

Master Betty's acting was a singular phenomenon, but it was also as beautiful as it was singular. I saw him in the part of Douglas, and he seemed almost like "some gay creature of the element," moving about gracefully, with all the flexibility of youth, and murmuring Aeolian sounds with plaintive tenderness. I shall never forget the way in which young Norval says, speaking of the fate of two brothers:

"And in my mind happy was he that died!"

The tones fell and seemed to linger prophetic on my ear.

Thus, although a large part of Betty's success was due to the contemporary thirst for novelty of whatever kind, it seems plain that for a stage on which grace and formal eloquence counted for so much, Betty had more positive qualifications than his extreme youth. Foolish though most of the hysterical encomiums showered upon him were, he may actually have deserved the praise of the discerning.

## *The Structure of the Modern Short Story*

A. L. BADER<sup>1</sup>

ANY teacher who has ever confronted a class with representative modern short stories will remember the disappointment, the puzzled "so-what" attitude, of certain members of the group. "Nothing happens in some of these stories," "They just end," or "They're not real stories" are frequent criticisms. An examination of the reviews of the yearly O'Brien anthologies as well as of the collections of leading short-story writers discloses a similar attitude on the part of many professional critics. Sometimes the phrase "Nothing happens" seems to mean that nothing significant happens, but in a great many cases it means that the modern short story is charged with a lack of narrative structure. Readers and critics accustomed to an older type of story are baffled by a newer type. They sense the underlying and unifying design of the one, but they find nothing equivalent to it in the other. Hence they maintain that the modern short story is plotless, static, fragmentary, amorphous—frequently a mere character sketch or vignette, or a mere reporting of a transient moment, or the capturing of a mood or nuance—everything, in fact, except a story.

These charges, it seems to me, are not borne out by an examination of representative modern short stories. In this article I shall compare and analyze a number of stories, old and new, in an endeavor to demonstrate that the modern short story does have structure, that is, a basic design or skeletal framework;

that this structure is essentially the same as that of the older story; and that what is frequently taken to be lack of structure is the result of various changes in technique.

The older type of story is the story of traditional plot. By a story of traditional plot I do not necessarily mean what has come to be known as "the plot story," although the latter is one example of the type. I mean any story (1) which derives its structure from plot based on a conflict and issuing in action; (2) whose action is sequential, progressive, that is, offers something for the reader to watch unfold and develop, usually by means of a series of complications, thus evoking suspense; and (3) whose action finally resolves the conflict, thus giving the story "point." The structure of traditional plot stories is essentially dramatic; somewhere near the beginning of the story the reader is given a line of progression to follow—a clear statement of the conflict, or a hint of it, or sometimes merely a sense of mystery, of tension, or a perception that a conflict exists although its nature is not known—and from this point on he follows the action to a crisis and a final resolution. There is a geometrical quality to plot structure of this type; just as a proposition is stated, developed by arguments, and finally proved, so a conflict is stated at the beginning of a story, developed by a series of scenes, and resolved at the end. The test for unity of such a structure is simple: Each scene, incident, and detail of the action not only must bear a direct

<sup>1</sup> University of Michigan.



relation to the conflict and its resolution but must also carry its share of significance at the particular point in the progression that it occupies. Thus the reader's sense of unity, of having watched something develop to the point of completion, is derived from the writer's focusing upon conflict and the eventual resolution of conflict.

Obviously, stories of traditional plot are capable of considerable variation; plot is not necessarily a strait jacket, as in the formula story, and it is only one of the elements of complete short-story form. Hence plot may be the dominant element in a story, or again it may be subordinated to elements such as character, theme, or atmosphere. Conflict may be of two fundamental types: external conflict, in which a character struggles against a tangible obstacle, and internal conflict, or conflict within a character. Also, there are wide differences as to how soon the conflict is made apparent to the reader and how much of it he is allowed to understand early in the story.

Jack London's "Love of Life" is a convenient example of the story in which plot is dominant and external. A prospector in the Far North, deserted by his partner and without food and ammunition, successfully overcomes the threat of death by starvation, exposure, and the attack of wild animals. The conflict here is between man and the forces of nature; it is apparent early in the story, and it is the focus of the reader's attention throughout. The action is progressive or sequential—consisting of a series of incidents, each a minor conflict in itself. The resolution occurs when the man reaches safety, and only when the outcome is no longer in doubt is the story completed. A second example, Sarah Orne Jewett's "A

White Heron," shows character dominant over plot. A nine-year-old girl, a lover of nature, is asked by a young ornithologist to reveal the haunts of the white heron in order that he may secure a specimen for his collection, but the girl refuses. The conflict is internal, between the girl's love for the beautiful bird and her desire to make the young man happy and win for her grandmother the reward he offers. The conflict, however, does not make its appearance until the mid-point of the story, since the first half is given over to characterization on which the resolution of the conflict eventually turns. Yet, despite its differences, the story conforms to the same structural pattern of traditional plot that the London story exemplifies. All that is claimed for plot here is that it furnishes the skeletal structure of the older type of story, whether it be a so-called "atmosphere story" like "The Fall of the House of Usher," a psychological story like "Markheim," or a story of theme like "Ethan Brand."<sup>2</sup>

By contrast the modern story frequently seems to be without narrative structure and, as was stated earlier, has been called plotless, fragmentary, and amorphous. Certainly there is evidence to show that the modern writer has attempted to break away from traditional plot. Plot, he feels, is unreal, artificial. Sherwood Anderson's remarks on plot in *A Story-teller's Story* are typical: "'The Poison Plot' I called it in conversation with my friends as the plot notion did seem to me to poison all story-telling. . . . In the construction of these stories there

<sup>2</sup> The surprise-ending story is only a seeming exception. While it is true that in stories such as Aldrich's "Marjorie Daw" and those of O. Henry the *real* story is hidden until the end, the reader nevertheless follows a conflict in the form of a progression of scenes and incidents, and the surprise ending merely contributes a new understanding to the progression and resolution of the conflict.

was endless variation but in all of them human beings, the lives of human beings, were altogether disregarded.... it was certain there were no plot short stories in any life I had known anything about." The same belief in the antipathy between plot and realism is seen in a challenging article by Bonaro Overstreet: "The nineteenth century story teller was a master of plot. The twentieth century fellow, seeing that life was not made up of neatly parcelled collections of incidents, took his rebel stand."<sup>3</sup>

Now, it seems to me that statements such as these are not so much protests against plot as against the misuse of plot. Fundamentally, they are protests against plot based on formulas and their "deceptive sentimentalizing of reality,"<sup>4</sup> which the writers find artificial. Yet plot is not necessarily artificial. Conflict, the basis of plot, is the very stuff of life, whether the individual writer tends to see it within the mind or in the external world. The kind of conflict the writer chooses, and the method by which the conflict is developed, may vary, and should vary, from story to story according to the individual aims of the writer; but the resultant plot need not illustrate the platitudes and mechanical patterns of the formula stories. And the fact is that modern stories which presumably satisfy their authors on the score of realism do exhibit the traditional structure of conflict, action, and resolution. The charges of plotlessness, of loose, invertebrate structure, that have been made against the modern story seem to me to

be better explained by changes in modern technique.

Chief among these changes are the stricter limitation of subject and the method of indirection. The modern writer's desire for realism causes him to focus upon a limited moment of time or a limited area of action in order that it may be more fully explored and understood. One result is that he frequently finds a story in material which would yield nothing to an earlier writer. Naturally he makes little use of plot complication, because he regards plot complication as artificial, and doubly so if the subject is limited. More important than this limitation of subject, however, is the marked emphasis upon indirection, which seemingly stems as much from the pervasive modern desire for subtlety as from the realistic ideal. To suggest, to hint, to imply, but not to state directly or openly—this is a favored contemporary technique. The method is well described by L. A. G. Strong: "The modern short story writer is content if, allowing the reader, to glance at his characters as through a window, he shows them making a gesture which is typical: that is to say, a gesture which enables the reader's imagination to fill in all that is left unsaid. Instead of giving us a finished action to admire, or pricking the bubble of some problem, he may give us only the key-piece of a mosaic, around which, if sufficiently perceptive, we can see in shadowy outline the completed pattern."<sup>5</sup> In other words, as will be apparent in the following analyses, the reader must supply the missing parts of the traditional plot in many modern stories.

A case in point is William March's "A

<sup>3</sup> Bonaro Overstreet, "Little Story, What Now?" *Saturday Review of Literature*, XXIV (November 22, 1941), 4.

<sup>4</sup> Warren Beck, "Art and Formula in the Short Story," *College English*, V (November, 1943), 59. Professor Beck demonstrates convincingly that the formula story is basically the story of sentimental platitude.

<sup>5</sup> L. A. G. Strong, "The Short Story: Notes at Random," *Lovat Dickson's Magazine*, II (March, 1934), 281-82.

Haircut in Toulouse" from his collection *Some Like Them Short*:

A veteran of World War I meets an old war comrade, Bob Decker, at a Legion reunion in France. Decker, grown stout and middle-aged, appears ridiculous in a flamboyant costume of gold-braided, bell-bottomed trousers, white silk blouse, wide crimson sash, and sombrero. He tells his friend a story that he has never told to anyone else. After the war, in Toulouse, he went to a French barber shop where his attempts to explain to the barber that he wanted "clippers on the neck but nothing off the top" were misunderstood; and out of sheer inability to protest further, he submitted to having his hair curled. To his surprise, he liked the result; it "brought out something in me that I didn't even know was there before." But almost immediately he reflected that if he appeared at his barracks with his hair curled, he would never live down the resulting ridicule. He then picked up the clippers and sheared a path through the curls on his head, forcing the barber to complete the job, while inwardly he lamented his lack of freedom to do as he wished.

At the conclusion of this narrative, Decker's wife and twelve-year-old daughter join the friends. After the introductions, Mrs. Decker apologizes for her husband's costume and adds, "All the boys from his Post are dressed just like he is." But the daughter says, "Don't you think Daddy looks *silly* dressed that way?" For a moment "the expression in his eyes must have been the same as it was when he picked up the French barber's clippers; but it passed almost at once and he smiled. . . ." He draws the child to him and says mildly, "Don't you suppose Daddy knows that as well as you do?"

If the synopsis is momentarily puzzling, so is the story, because the method is that of indirection. The writer's aim here is to depict a conflict within a character, to let us see within a man, to catch a glimpse of what is individual in him, even though it is usually hidden from the world. Decker, seemingly a conformist, secretly desires to individualize himself, to play the beau, to flout the conventions in the matter of dress, but he fears public ridicule. Some fifteen years before the time of the story, he

yielded to his fear of ridicule when he sheared off his curled hair; and he has continued to yield. Now, because all the members of his post have chosen a flamboyant costume for the reunion, he can appear in a way that delights him, but beneath his gay exterior—and that is the real point of the story—lies the unhappy awareness of his own absurd appearance, and it is brought to a focus by his daughter's remark and his reply: "Don't you suppose Daddy knows that as well as you do?"

Once understood, the story is seen to possess the traditional elements of narrative structure. There is a conflict, the conflict is not immediately apparent to the reader, and it is the chief aim of the writer to make the reader see and understand it in order that he may understand the man Decker. It is made apparent by action, but here the story departs sharply from the traditional technique. There are two seemingly unrelated scenes—one in the barber shop at Toulouse, the other in the hotel lobby when the wife and daughter appear. The seeming lack of relationship is deliberate; the emphasis is not upon the sequence of the scenes, their progression, or what has been called earlier their geometrical quality. Rather it is upon their meaning. The aim of a story of this kind is a perceived relationship. Given, in L. A. G. Strong's language, the parts of a mosaic, the reader must find the pattern. The "key-piece" of the mosaic is the statement: ". . . the expression in his eyes must have been the same as it was when he picked up the French barber's clippers"; and when at the very end of the story Decker says, "Don't you suppose Daddy knows that as well as you do?" the reader's mind should, in a moment of illumination, connect the two statements as well as supply what is omitted. The omissions, of



course, are clear statements of what Decker's internal conflict is, and the fact that he has been repeatedly frustrated by convention.

Finally, the story satisfies the third requirement of plot structure in that the action resolves the conflict. Here again the method is indirect; the resolution is by implication. Instead of being taken into Decker's mind by the writer, we are given two objective statements, one about the look in the man's eyes and the other what he says. Having furnished the reader with the requisite hints, the writer stops. The suggestion is that *this time* Decker hoped to satisfy his own desire to dress as he wished as well as to escape ridicule. But his daughter's remark has recalled him unhappily to the reality of a world of conventional judgment, and the immediate conflict is resolved when once more he recognizes frustration. It is, of course, true that the story derives much of its power from its ability to project the reader's imagination beyond the limits of the story, to make him see that Decker's life has included many such experiences and that presumably his frustration will continue to the end of his life. Also it should be observed that in a story of this type the resolution and moment of perception are practically simultaneous and that the emotion is evoked principally at the end when the reader understands the situation.

Such a story, then, may be said to have the traditional elements of structure. Its principle of unity is that of the perceived relationship; each incident contributes to the perception of that relationship, there is an ordered arrangement of the parts, and no one incident can be omitted without destroying the unity and hence the meaning of the whole. Obviously, such a story puts demands upon

both writer and reader. The suggestions and implications must be nicely calculated to reveal neither too little nor too much, and the reader must be alert to seize upon what is given and construct from it the desired pattern of meaning.

A second example of the modern type of story is John O'Hara's "Are We Leaving Tomorrow?" from his collection *Files on Parade*:

A young couple, Mr. and Mrs. Campbell from Montreal, are staying at a resort hotel in the States. They keep a good deal to themselves, although Mrs. Campbell, "a pleasant, friendly little woman," has a nodding acquaintance with some of the other guests. Quite by chance they meet Mr. and Mrs. Loomis in the hotel bar and talk small talk over their drinks. We learn that "Mrs. Campbell was almost gay that afternoon." Mr. Campbell, however, has said nothing.

One evening, after a movie shown by the hotel management, Mr. Loomis insists on buying the Campbells a drink. When he gives his order, Campbell tells the waiter to bring the bottle, and, after a moment's incredulity, Mr. Loomis confirms the order. The talk is idle gossip of movie stars, and Campbell, drinking steadily, is curiously aloof; but, as the Loomises feel this and address their remarks to him, he begins to respond in an exaggerated way, nodding before it is time to nod and saying, "Yes, yes, yes," very rapidly. Then he tells a story. "It had in it a priest, female anatomy, improbable situations, a cuckold, unprintable words, and no point." The Loomises, shocked and embarrassed, say "Good night" and leave.

Mrs. Campbell, who has lowered her eyes all during her husband's story, now says, "I wonder if the man is still there at the travel desk. I forgot all about the tickets for tomorrow." Her husband asks, "Tomorrow? Are we leaving tomorrow?" Her answer is "Yes," and she gets up to see about the tickets.

Here again both story and synopsis may offer momentary difficulty. Yet the "key-piece" of the mosaic has been provided by the writer. Linked to a chronic alcoholic who is offensive when drunk, Mrs. Campbell spends her life taking



him from one resort to another. What happens in the story, it is suggested, is the repetitious pattern of their lives. Arrived at a new hotel, they at first remain aloof, but after a time Mrs. Campbell's natural friendliness causes her to speak and nod to other guests. Sooner or later, presumably by chance, they are brought into social relationship with others. Mr. Campbell reveals himself for what he is, and his wife feels the necessity of moving on, of "leaving tomorrow."

Aside from the fact that the story is not as compressed in time as March's "A Haircut in Toulouse," it shows generally similar characteristics. First of all, there is conflict in the story—an immediate conflict between Mr. and Mrs. Campbell, but, from a broader point of view, a conflict between Mrs. Campbell's desires for normal social companionship and the social mores which she can never satisfy because of her husband's character. As in the March story, the conflict is not immediately apparent to the reader, although the whole point of the narrative is to make him understand it and, by understanding it, sympathize with Mrs. Campbell. Again, the conflict is revealed through action which is not sequential in the dramatic sense but which has as its aim a perceived relationship. There are four scenes: the opening picture of the Campbells as mere spectators at the hotel; the chance meeting with the Loomises; the second meeting with the Loomises when Campbell tells his story; and the final scene with its moment of illumination when we perceive the entire situation and behind it the pattern of the Campbells' lives. The "key-piece" is Mrs. Campbell's "Yes," to her husband's question, "Tomorrow? Are we leaving tomorrow?" It is at this point that all previous scenes and details, when the requisite omissions are supplied, fall into

a pattern of meaning. In this case the principal omissions concern the Campbells' past; the reader must see that what occurs in the story has occurred many times before. Finally, the immediate conflict is resolved when it becomes apparent that Mrs. Campbell has failed once more to achieve her desire; but, as in the March story, the resolution and moment of perception are simultaneous, the emotion is evoked at the end, and the basic conflict is not resolved, since Mrs. Campbell's life will probably continue to be a series of "leaving tomorrow's."

Another way of demonstrating the existence of structure in such a story is to re-form the parts into the conventional dramatic pattern. The story could begin, for example, by showing the Campbells arriving at a new resort. Next we might learn what Mrs. Campbell's problem is, how she longs for social companionship, and how frequently she has tried to make just such a new start as she is making when the story opens. After the first chance meeting with the Loomises, she would build her hopes anew, only to have them dashed by her husband's conduct at the second meeting with the Loomises. The ending would be the same—a reference to tickets and to leaving tomorrow. If the story were written according to the dramatic pattern, the traditional structure of conflict, sequential action, and resolution would stand forth clearly. The reader, knowing the situation early in the story, would follow the action principally to learn the outcome; the question would be: Will Mrs. Campbell succeed or fail? As the story is actually written, however, an understanding of the situation, that is, the conflict, and the outcome or resolution are reached simultaneously. Yet the elements of narrative structure are present, despite the different pattern.

Thus, it seems to me, the modern short story demonstrates its claim to the possession of narrative structure derived from plot. Basically, its structure is not very different from that of the older and

more conventional type of story, but its technique is different, and it is this difference in technique that is frequently mistaken for lack of structure by readers and critics.

## N.C.T.E. Election Notice

The Nominating Committee proposes for officers of the National Council of Teachers of English from November 24, 1945, to the end of the 1946 Annual Meeting the following slate:

For President: HELENE W. HARTLEY,  
Syracuse

For First Vice-President: WARD  
GREEN, Tulsa

For Second Vice-President: H. A.  
DOMINOCOVICH, Germantown, Pa.

For Secretary-Treasurer: W. WIL-  
BUR HATFIELD, Chicago

The Committee's nominations for Directors-at-Large (to be voted upon by the Annual Business Meeting of all Council members) are:

EDNA STERLING, Spokane

MARION EDMAN, Detroit

BLANCHE TREZEVANT, Baton Rouge

EDNA TAYLOR, Janesville

WALTER BARNES, New York Uni-  
versity

HARLEN ADAMS, Stanford Univer-  
sity

The Nominating Committee proposes for the (traditional but not constitutional) Advisers to the Editor of the *English Journal*:

FLORENCE GUILD, Indianapolis

PRUDENCE BOSTWICK, Denver

ROBERTA GREEN, Tulane University

MIRIAM BOOTH, Erie

NELLIE APPY MURPHY, Arcata,  
Calif.

The constitution provides that this slate shall be published in May, that additions may be made by petition, and that the slate, including any additions, shall be published again in the fall. No nominating petitions have been received.

A footnote to the constitution says that the Council rules of order provide for nominations from the floor.

W. WILBUR HATFIELD  
Secretary

## *Teaching the Heart of Literature*

CALVIN D. LINTON\*

THE classroom in Johns Hopkins University's Gilman Hall was dimly lit and overly warm. A radiator hissed quietly, and outside the window the snow-covered landscape accentuated the comfort within. The class of a dozen graduate students, awaiting the arrival of the professor, was already drowsy. It appeared that no sparks would be struck from such anvils that day.

Then the professor entered. His step was vigorous and his manner that of one who approaches an enjoyable task. His lecture that day was on Thomas Dekker, and it is unlikely that anyone in the class had any unusual enthusiasm for the subject. The opening remarks were deceptively simple—references to facts of Dekker's life, his relationships with contemporaries, a few revealing anecdotes. Then passages from his plays were read, effectively, with keen appreciation. General comments on Dekker's methods and tendencies were supported by perfectly appropriate quotations. The professor's voice was strong, sincere, and intensely revealing of his own enthusiasm for the subject.

Gradually the class brightened. Pages of the text were turned with more interest; and, before many minutes were spent, the learning process was in full swing—not only acquisition of facts but appreciation of Dekker's qualities, perception of his beauties, comprehension of the reasons why his words still survive.

With seeming ease and while apparently following the line of most interest and least resistance, the course of the lecture was steered into what a later perusal of notes would reveal to be a carefully charted course.

Five minutes before the period ended, the professor, now followed by every eye, pushed his notes aside and strode to the window. For a moment he gazed silently at the wintry scene. His voice resumed, quietly. He spoke of the quality of Dekker's genius, of the passionate Elizabethan eagerness to strain life of every experience. In the students' minds, Dekker took his place among his contemporaries, not as a pallid bust in a row of worthies, but as a richly colored oil painting, his lineaments clear, his nature familiar, his genius felt. When the bell ending the period rang, the class had been through an intellectual and an emotional experience that they would not soon forget. And one more thing: I, a student in that class, returned with the professor to his office. When he sat at his desk, he was an exhausted man—and so will every instructor be who has properly taught English literature for an hour.

The professor that day was Dr. Hazelton Spencer, whose untimely death in July, 1944, deprived the field of English literature of a wise, sensitive, and indefatigable scholar. He taught many lessons directly, but the ones he taught indirectly and by example were of equal value. The students of that winter's day class learned much about Dekker; they also learned the teaching principles

\* Lieutenant commander, United States Navy, school administrator, Minecraft Training Center, Little Creek, Va.

of meticulous preparation, intense concentration of every faculty in each lecture, judicious selection of material. But the vital lesson was one that a tragic number of teachers either have never learned or have forgotten, namely, that the appreciation of literature is a matter of the spirit and the emotions as well as of the intellect. There is more to it than the vital statistics, which the encyclopedias give with such admirable thoroughness and which to the unperceiving instructor are paramount. "Alexander Pope," such an instructor will intone, "died in 1744; he wrote almost entirely in heroic couplets." (Who cares, particularly in an early morning class, for the brittle delicacy, the superb economy of his lines; the twisted tragedy of his body and life; the challenge of his ideas, the flashing truth of some, the subtle falseness of others?) "Cowper," the dry voice will continue, "went mad, or practically so; he was, in many ways, a transition figure between the neoclassical and the Romantic periods. He wrote 'The Task.'" (Why bother to quicken the students' hearts with a truly appreciative reading of "To Mary" when so many beautifully superficial facts are at hand.) The teacher of literature who does not touch the heart is wasting his time.

Literature, let it be clearly stated at once, is not a "utilitarian" course, and as such it meets the stern disapproval of many practical persons who, through the educational provisions of the "G.I. Bill of Rights," find themselves concerned as never before with the content of post-war, government-assisted education. And such persons are correct when they contend that the man who can tell you that Chaucer's Italian period came between his French and English periods will not, by that fact, advance himself materially in industry. Nor will the businessman

whose knowledge of Shakespeare includes the fact that a Bad Quarto is not an immoral book find his income greatly increased thereby. Only with the realization of what the teaching of English literature is supposed to do, and an adjustment of teaching methods to fit this realization, will the course assume its true position of importance.

Briefly, the teaching of English literature is intended to broaden the understanding, open new possibilities of rich enjoyment, develop sensitivity to beauty, refine the taste, instill the wisdom and beauty of the ages in minds otherwise teeming with utilitarian vexations, and enrich the inward aesthetic and spiritual resources on which much of the enjoyment and romance of living depend. Let it be remembered, for example, that the instructor who has showed his students the magic of Lear's ineffectual fumbling with the button of his coat in the closing scene has given them more than facts; he has taught them to see beauty where it is not obvious; he has quickened their sensitivity so that it will respond to more subtle stimuli than before.

It was recently advocated that literature courses—particularly those in American literature—should strive to produce a knowledge of the social, economic, and political history of the period covered.<sup>2</sup> In other words, kill two birds with one stone; teach literature and history together and save half your time.

Happily, this is almost precisely what any good literature course does; but it does not set out to do it, nor is that the limit of its purpose. Most literature is the expression of the time in which it was written, and its relationship to his-

<sup>2</sup> E. C. Drake, "Renegotiate the English Teachers!" *Harper's Magazine*, No. 1133, October, 1944, pp. 470-73.



tory is inescapably close. No thorough student of literature can avoid becoming reasonably familiar with the historical background of the period studied; but, again, such knowledge is a by-product, or the tool of scholars. The object of a course in literature is not comprised in the question "How much do you know?" but in "How much do you understand, how much do you feel, how much greater are your capabilities for the perception and enjoyment of beauty, for the recognition of true values?" These things will not be learned by selecting one notable political document (as suggested by Mr. Drake) and studying it so thoroughly that one suddenly discovers that he has been exposed to a course in history. The greatest monuments of literature are timeless and dependent on no political scheme or social structure. They come from man's ageless spirit, and their message is universal. One does not study them primarily to learn history any more than one studies the Taj Mahal to discover the composition of its mortar. The prickling sensation along the spine (which William Lyon Phelps, Alexander Woollcott, and others have declared to be the final evidence of greatness in literature), the quickening of the heart, the uplift of the spirit—these are the things the student must feel if he is not to waste his time in an English literature class.

The limitless boundaries of literature are implied in Mr. Drake's article, and it is from the fact that no other single course of study touches on so many fields of human activity or comes closer to giving a complete education that the danger of ineffective teaching stems. Art, politics, science, philosophy, history, economics—all are comprised because all must be conveyed through the medium of the written word, which is literature. The sheer potential content of a litera-

ture course tends so to overwhelm the instructor with facts that the spirit is excluded.

If the goal of teaching literature is so pleasant, if it is, indeed, the opening-up to a group of presumably eager students the inexhaustible satisfaction of reading, why is the goal so often not achieved? Surely the teaching profession, having no appeal whatsoever, God wot, to the get-rich-quick schemer, is entered by men and women who derive deep satisfaction from their work and who wish to instil in their students the same resources. The answer must lie in the instructor's methods, not his sincerity—at the same time admitting that there are many teachers of literature whose aesthetic sense is extremely undernourished and whose private reading seems to consist pretty largely of the comic book.

The first obvious requirement, therefore, of a properly taught literature course—once the basic purpose of such a course has been comprehended—is a deep, constantly growing appreciation of his subject by the instructor. Many shortcomings of delivery, classroom presence, and voice quality may be overlooked if the enthusiasm of the instructor shines through.

Next, the instructor must stop and analyze the specific reasons for his reaction to a given piece of writing. It is of no use to inform the class that a passage is beautiful, if the statement is not substantiated. The mood must be set, the background analyzed, and the occasion for the lines clarified in accordance with the reasons for the instructor's own appreciation of the passage. In a word, the beauty of the lines must be demonstrated, not declared. As Boswell made Johnson a figure of reality unequalled in biographical literature by recounting in

painstaking detail *what* Johnson did and said, not by making general statements as to the *effect* of what he did and said, so the instructor must reveal basic causes. Probably most young teachers have experienced discouragement when a class does not respond to a favorite passage of literature. The fault is usually the instructor's. In a survey course I once read the exquisite lines from the third act of *Richard II* which begin, "Of comfort no man speak: let's talk of graves, of worms, and epitaphs; make dust of our paper, and with rainy eyes write sorrow on the bosom of the earth." At the end, I noted with dismay that at least half of the class was entirely inattentive and apathetic, and the reason was simple. In the usual rush of a survey course, I had had no opportunity to build up background, develop Richard's character, or put into the students' minds the hundred details which in my own mind made the passage wonderfully moving. The survey course, incidentally, is a problem in itself, but part of the answer lies in taking up fewer authors and hitting them harder.

Further, the instructor must broaden his own aesthetic horizon so that he will not so limit his enthusiasm that only the students possessing his own temperament will agree with him. Perhaps the art of criticism is, to a depressing extent, merely the rationalization of one's own preferences, but it is the instructor's duty to present all literature fairly and appreciatively even if certain periods or types do not appeal to his taste. I once worked with an extremely capable young teacher for whom English literature began and ended with the eighteenth century. He agreed with every orthodox dicta of eighteenth-century criticism, and he believed that the "improvement" of Shakespeare by Cibber, Garrick, and the rest constituted the necessary refine-

ment of a rather uncouth poet. In neoclassicism he is a productive, skilful scholar, but as a teacher of any other period he is foredoomed to partial success at best. The teacher who is not in a position to concentrate on one period, as in the teaching of graduate students, cannot afford to narrow his interests.

In addition, the instructor must constantly keep in mind the dull, routine principles of good teaching in any field, most of which are more important in the teaching of literature than any other subject. He must remember that long hours of preparation are as necessary as enthusiasm. His problem of selection is immense. He must discover by experience what to include and what to exclude. Remembering always that he is dealing with moods and emotions, he must prepare and study his effects as laboriously as an actor studies his role. So limited is his time before the class that almost every gesture must be planned. This does not imply artificiality; but the instructor must be three-fourths actor, and apparent naturalness and effectiveness before a class are as much the result of conscious preparation as are the stage-player's before an audience. At Winthrop College in Rock Hill, South Carolina, one of the most popular features of each school session has for some time been the annual reading by the head of the English department, Dr. Paul Wheeler, of selections from English and American literature before the assembled student body in the large auditorium. The essential role of what Washington Irving called the "traps and trickery" of stage effects is shown in Professor Wheeler's performance. Every device of the completely equipped stage is utilized, and the readings, through the skill of the reader and the harmony of the physical arrangements, are extremely effective. Literature takes on the element of emo-

tional enjoyment which it is intended to possess. Few instructors have the opportunity of setting such a stage in their classroom, but the value of the lesson remains, and there are many things that *are* possible in any classroom. The function of music, for example, should not be overlooked. A small record player (of good tonal quality) in the classroom is of the greatest value if judiciously used. Appropriate music played dimly in the background can aid a reading, and maximum use of recorded plays and professional readings can be made.

All this is to say that the teacher must expect to work and sweat at his job and become proficient at many trades. It may be safely said that the instructor who does not tire himself in a fifty-minute class has not done his full duty, and too many believe that a sort of vague, listless rapture in the presence of great literature will convey all that is necessary to the class. The normal apathy of any class must be overcome, its spirit caught up, before instruction, much less inspiration, can begin. And to break the bonds of somnolence fortified

by ignorance, which is the normal initial state of most classes, is as hard work as a man can undertake.

All these principles can, of course, be only generally applied. Every teacher will have his own peculiar talents and limitations, and it is not to be expected that all will follow the same road to effectiveness. The important thing is that every teacher realize precisely what his full duty is, that he tirelessly examine his methods and revise them, constantly aware that the only bridge between his knowledge and the students' lack of it is the skill with which the subject is taught.

Mathematics and Latin, physics and engineering, can be taught by the transmission of a sufficient number of facts from teacher to student. This is not enough in the teaching of literature. The facts in themselves are of limited value unless they are so touched by the instructor with magic that they reach beyond the student's surface awareness to inspire his imagination and to provide the emotional and aesthetic nourishment which the human spirit must have or die.



## *What Freshman Composition Cannot Do*

H. BUNKER WRIGHT<sup>1</sup>

### I

THOSE of us who teach the required course in English do not need to be reminded of its limitations—but there are others who do. The difficulties with which we wrestle are so obvious to us that we forget that people who lack our experience are ignorant of them and are therefore inclined to expect too much from the course. We are astounded when a colleague from another department complains, "I have a senior in my class whose writing is atrocious. What is the matter with your work in Freshman Composition? Why didn't you teach him something?"

Too often, under such circumstances, we just look aggrieved and maintain an impatient silence. Sometimes we try to make an explanation; but, no matter how successful we may be in exonerating ourselves before the occasional individual who tells us how he feels, we still have done nothing to convince the numerous people who hold similar opinions but keep silent except when they are talking to one another or to the dean.

We must recognize the fact that most members of the faculty outside our department have an attitude toward Freshman English that differs from ours. Like us, they believe that the ability to write clearly and effectively is essential both as a tool for use in college courses and as a mark of the education and culture to be expected of college graduates. They are even conscious of the fact that the col-

lege has an obligation to see to it that all students acquire this ability. They make the mistake, however, of thinking that they have fulfilled their share of this responsibility when they vote to require every student to take Freshman Composition. They send him to us to get his writing perfected just as they would send him to the oculist to be fitted with glasses; then they wash their hands of the matter—except to demand results. They are not aware of any injustice in this arrangement; indeed, they are inclined to feel that they have acted very generously. Have they not assured us of many classes and a large staff? Have they not recognized a duty and delegated it to the men who are supposed to be best qualified to handle it? Now it is up to the English instructors. We have been told what is expected; we have been given the students. We must therefore accept the blame if any senior is discovered making unsatisfactory use of the language.

If such an attitude merely challenged the honor of our department, we might ignore it. The only reason that the situation deserves our serious attention is that it endangers a fundamental objective of college education. If we want to make sure that all our graduates are truly literate, we must make our colleagues understand what Freshman English cannot do. Only in that way can we make them realize the extent of their responsibility.

### II

I am not proposing any new program for achieving the formal co-operation of

<sup>1</sup> Associate professor of English, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio.



other departments. Arrangements by which English instructors read history book reports or supervise term papers in economics may be useful, but they do not solve the problem I am presenting. Most such devices leave the responsibility for good composition with the English department; and, as long as this situation exists, the rest of the faculty will feel that it is merely assisting us in our work. Any attempt to make our colleagues officially responsible by means of a faculty regulation is equally ineffectual. Many colleges have the rule that each instructor must report to the English department any student whose writing is poor, but everywhere the rule is neglected after the first year or two. Admirable as such systems may be in their intentions, they cannot succeed in practice as long as the members of other departments misunderstand the nature of training in composition and continue to think of it as exclusively *our* field.

What is needed is not a new plan; it is a new attitude. And the only way in which that can be achieved is through propaganda. We must conquer our natural reluctance to publicize our difficulties and the inadequacy of our efforts. We must squelch the feeling that it is indiscreet to admit our inability to accomplish what others expect of us. We must be frank, bring criticism into the open, and answer it by showing why it is impossible for Freshman English to accomplish all that is generally demanded of it.

Some of our colleagues take our usual reticence to mean either that we are ignorant of the fact that students who have passed the required course often write poorly or that, feeling guilty, we try to conceal our knowledge of it. We cannot expect these people to attend our committee meetings and annual conferences

or to read our professional journals in order to discover how conscious we are of our shortcomings and how assiduously we strive to overcome them. We must bear the gospel to them, and we must do it boldly. Humble self-depreciation is not appropriate, nor are appeals for help. We must present the problem as theirs and challenge them to do something about it.

To succeed, we shall have to be persistent, for it is impossible to sway a whole faculty with one mimeographed letter or with a single paper read at some general meeting. Furthermore, all members of the department will have to participate in the campaign, for neither the head of the department nor a special committee can alone maintain the kind of pressure that is necessary. The most effective persuasion will be accomplished only through frequent informal discussions with groups of friends and through arguments with individuals.

We all know what ought to be said; the danger is that we may think the situation so obvious that we will not speak. Let us, therefore, review the most important points with which we should indoctrinate our colleagues.

### III

At the very beginning, it should be demonstrated clearly that one course in English administered during the freshman year can do little beyond preparing a student for the training that the rest of his college career should offer, that its accomplishments must be supported and enhanced by further practice and discipline in the other courses that he takes.

When a student with poor background and training in English enters a composition class, the instructor is confronted with a problem more formidable than that faced by any other member of the

faculty. In the first place, he must help the student to acquire a skill, not just a body of new information; and he must try to make the practice of this skill habitual. In the second place, his work is complicated by the fact that the student has been using the language incorrectly all his life and that his errors have become ingrained. The instructor must therefore eradicate old habits in order to establish new ones—always a difficult process even under conditions most conducive to success. In the third place, the instructor does not have such favorable circumstances to aid him. In the student's conversations with his school-mates, in his letters to his parents, probably in the papers that he writes for other courses, he is free to continue his old patterns of expression.

In spite of these handicaps, a combination of effort on the part of the student and skilful coercion on the part of the instructor will ultimately succeed in making almost any student write acceptably in the papers submitted to this particular instructor. The student will also be capable of writing correctly for any other instructor, but no course in composition can guarantee that he will do so unless it is required of him. It will still be easier for him to follow his long established practices than to employ the newly acquired skill, and he is almost certain to do so unless he is prevented by the vigilance of all his instructors. If, three years after he has completed his required work in composition, he is again abusing the language as disgracefully as upon his entrance, the fault cannot legitimately be imputed to his training in Freshman Composition.

The same kind of relapse may also be suffered by the mediocre student who usually avoids the most shameful solecisms but, unless required to write care-

fully, throws his thoughts together without organization, uses incoherent sentences, and accepts the first word that comes to mind.

Students of both classes find that in most courses they are not criticized—their grade is not reduced—for poor speech or poor composition. They therefore suppose that "it doesn't make any difference," that their instructors in English made them worry unnecessarily, and that the rest of the faculty does not care how they use the language. It is not surprising that the students relax and that, as a consequence, the writing of some of them deteriorates steadily. Every such case, it should be clear, represents a failure on the part of all members of the faculty who permitted the student to pass through their classes without making an adequate effort to correct his manner of expression.

#### IV

The second point that it is essential for us to impress upon our colleagues is that they are capable of fulfilling the obligation that we have forced them to recognize and that the duty will not prove onerous.

It should be clear from what we have already said that what is needed is not for every member of the faculty to devote part of each course to teaching English but for him to motivate the students in his courses to use the good English they have already been taught. The most valuable thing that the instructor of art, language, natural science, or social science can do is simply to make his students realize that he is not indifferent, that he considers the correct, precise, and effective use of English important, and that he requires it in his courses. This alone would accomplish a great deal. A statement to this effect included

in the announcement of written assignments or typed at the top of each sheet of examination questions will prevent much carelessness. The instructor can show the genuineness of his concern by correcting an occasional vulgarism in recitations and by marking a few meaningless sentences in written work. If he really wants to make the student exert himself, he may point out that a certain term paper would have earned a higher mark if the ideas had been arranged according to some logical plan. Better still, he can show the student that his low grade on a particular examination question was due, not to his failure to "guess right," but to his careless failure to make an accurate statement of what he knew and meant to say.

This kind of direction will not constitute an additional burden upon the instructor. Since better writing promotes better thinking, he will find that it is a means of making the teaching of his course easier and more effective and that it helps him to achieve his own objectives as well as those of college education in general. No technical knowledge of grammar or syntax is demanded. The faults

that the instructor must discourage are those that he is bound to notice and to deprecate whenever he encounters them. He does not need any special training in order to recognize disconnected thoughts, lack of organization, and sentences that have no meaning or that distort the intended meaning. It will not require any special effort for him to discover misspelled words, words used incorrectly or inappropriately, or vulgar errors in grammar. He already sees these faults. All that is needed is for him to call them to the attention of the perpetrators and brand them as serious blemishes.

If every instructor insists on good writing and speaking and if he shows his disapproval of careless composition, he will make the pleasant discovery that much of the poor English of which he has complained is due to the students' indifference and indolence rather than inability or ineffective training. He will, moreover, have the satisfaction of knowing that he is giving his students a necessary discipline—a discipline for which Freshman Composition lays the essential foundation, but which it cannot presume to consummate.

---

From Connecticut, which has recently recommended that *time* for high-school English be reduced, Alonzo B. Grace, commissioner of education for the state, writes:

Sometimes the schools have been criticized because our youth have evidenced lack of reading ability, mastery of the mechanics of English or the development of appreciation of the literature of the world. May I say that one teacher alone cannot teach five or six periods of English per day with classes of 30 or 40 pupils, a total of 150 to 200 different individuals, and do an effective job of teaching. There must be smaller classes in the field of English if we desire mastery and the elimination of mediocrity. There must be aid in the detail work of the classroom. In my judgment, every teacher in the school system is equally responsible for spoken and written English whether this be in the algebra class, in physical education, or in the industrial arts room. Until we can cooperate under the leadership of the English teacher to see to it that the English language is written and spoken effectively, we shall merely have toyed with the educational process. We have little right to urge the expansion of American education upward and downward to include nursery schools and universal higher education for everyone until we can do a decent job in the educational system to which we already are committed.



## Round Table

### EMILY DICKINSON

There has been some doubt in my mind for a long time as to the correct interpretation of three famous lines of Emily Dickinson, although authorities like G. F. Whicher, Genevieve Taggard, and Sister Mary James Power are in complete agreement as to their meaning. These are the lines:

The only news I know  
Is bulletins all day  
From Immortality.

All three authorities mentioned take the phrase "bulletins from Immortality" to mean something like "telegrams from the skies" (the expression is Sister Power's). Professor Whicher, for example, says: "Not a family in the Dickinsons' wide circle of neighbors that did not receive her [Emily Dickinson's] tiny notes on any occasion of joy or sorrow, and sometimes on no occasion at all. Many of these little 'bulletins from Immortality' have been included in her published letters, but a large number still remain uncollected (*This Was a Poet*, p. 143)." Genevieve Taggard quotes all three lines and adds: "But she wanted other news. Perhaps she feared that George Gould would go to war and be shot (*The Life and Mind of Emily Dickinson*, p. 155)." Sister Mary James Power (*In the Name of the Bee*) devotes to these three lines a whole chapter, which she entitles "The Only News I Know." Sister Mary James Power leaves no doubt as to her understanding of the lines (pp. 20-21): "While she was watering her favorite cape jasmine plant, while she was pouring wine jelly into her little heart-shaped molds, or while she was contemplating her beloved trinity in nature—the bee, the butterfly, and the breeze—there flashed little messages in code. The day long she received them. . . . Unerringly it seems, she knew their source." Then Sister Power quotes the

"source," the three lines above, implying that the source was God or Heaven. A page or two later, Sister Power adds: "Emily's daily bulletins brought her only news of God and His neighborhood."

I disagree. Emily's use of the word "immortality" in the sense that our three authorities understand it is rare. The word had several meanings for Emily Dickinson. It meant fame, of course, undying fame. It also meant eternal life of body or spirit, that eternal life, however (and Emily seldom forgot it), which can be achieved only by death:

Because I could not stop for Death,  
He kindly stopped for me;  
The carriage held but just ourselves  
And Immortality.

In fact, death, Emily realized, was so essential to its attainment that the word "immortality" is often, both in her poetry and in her letters, practically synonymous with, or a euphemism for, "death"—as can be readily seen in these lines written to Colonel Higginson in 1863, when Emily heard that he, too, had gone to war: "Should you, before this reaches you, experience Immortality, who will inform me of the exchange? Could you, with honor, avoid death, I entreat you, sir."

Emily uses the word similarly in a letter to Mrs. Bowles, referring to the death of her own father and to the death of Mrs. Bowles's husband: "Immortality as a guest is sacred, but when it becomes as with you and with us, a member of the family, the tie is more vivid." Sometimes Emily seriously doubted the existence of that life after death, for the only ones who can possibly assure us of its existence are the dead. Unfortunately,

The only secret people keep  
Is Immortality.

Perhaps we can now return to those original lines under discussion. Those lines (and



only those lines) were part of a letter written to Colonel Higginson during the summer of 1864 (the date is important), written soon after Emily learned with a shock that he had been wounded. The Civil War was already in its third year. The number of Amherst soldiers who had died in battle was mounting alarmingly. "Mrs. Adams," writes Emily to her cousins, "had news of the death of her boy to-day, from a wound at Annapolis. . . . Another one died in October—from fever caught in the camp." That was in December, 1861. In April, 1862, Emily writes to her cousins again. This time she tells them of another death, the tragic death of Frazer Stearns of Amherst College. "Austin [her brother] is stunned completely," says Emily. In the same letter she adds: "Sorrow seems more general than it did, and not the estate of a few persons, since the war began." How well Emily knew! She read the newspaper daily. Daily she read the bulletins, the long lists of casualties—friends, relatives, Amherst soldiers, and Amherst students! In 1864 the bulletins were as alarming as ever when suddenly Emily learned, from Colonel Higginson himself, evidently, that he too had been wounded. Emily wrote back at once: "Dear Friend,—Are you in danger? I did not know that you were hurt. Will you tell me more? . . . I am surprised and anxious since receiving your note." Then Emily adds immediately in explanation of her undue anxiety:

The only news I know  
Is bulletins all day  
From Immortality.

Certainly, she could not have been speaking at such a time of loss and tragedy, in a letter entirely concerned with wounds and death, and at a time when she was herself quite ill (she was at the time in Boston, undergoing treatment for her eyes), of "telegrams from

the skies." Certainly, these "bulletins from Immortality" which she received constantly in 1864 while the Civil War was still raging could not have been news of God and His neighborhood but news of death.

Later in life, exactly when it is not known, I believe, Emily added three more stanzas to that original one, making a new poem of it all. But that is another story.

LIEUTENANT RALPH MARCELLINO

DOUGLAS, ARIZONA

### A MEMBER OF N.C.T.E. ON VETERAN EDUCATION

I think the essential matters for returned servicemen are quality of the work offered and their teachers' individual attitudes toward them—each much more important than any system. We have about fifty Marines in V-12, fresh from the worst Pacific battles, and we have a steady stream of V-7, who have had two years of college somewhere and more or less active service. One of the Marines almost went to pieces; the others have adjusted quite well. They feel superior to the old Joe-College attitude. But they will work on anything a moderately mature mind ought to work on. And they are tremendously grateful for individual attention, not because they are "veterans" but because it is a sign that the college is doing its job. It may not be quite so simple as that. But they have had enough machinery. They like to belong, but to belong as individuals. Probably they should have older instructors, if same have kept growing, rather than youngsters, even in elementary courses. No system will help them, but I think good teaching and a healthy academic atmosphere will bring them through all right.

## Current English Forum

Conducted by

THE N.C.T.E. COMMITTEE ON CURRENT ENGLISH USAGE

[NOTE.—During the current school year the "Forum" will consist of a series of short articles on grammar and usage instead of the usual questions and answers. However, readers are invited to continue sending in questions on language problems. They will be answered by letter; some extended answers may furnish articles for the published series.]

### "Who" and "Whom"

SHOULD the English instructor call "Who do you want?" incorrect and insist on *whom*? Grammars and handbooks sampled at random differ sharply in their answers to this question. Blount and Northup say flatly: "The case should always depend upon the grammatical construction, not on the position of the word in the sentence."<sup>1</sup> Woolley and Scott call "Who did you mean?" acceptable, and "Whom did you mean?" correct.<sup>2</sup> A much publicized recent textbook recommends without qualification "*Whom* (not *who*) did he marry?"<sup>3</sup> When Marckwardt and Walcott restudied the items in the Leonard survey, they found "Who are you looking for?" established colloquial English.<sup>4</sup> The latest *Webster's New International* notes (s.v. "who") that "use of *who* for *whom* as object either of a verb or preposition which follows intervening words, though ungrammatical, is common colloquially and is still found in good writers . . . as *who* are you thinking of?"

These disagreements occur because (a) some grammarians believe that logic and tradition are more valid than usage, and (b) grammarians who are aware that usage de-

termines grammar do not always have the necessary facts to decide a question of correctness. If we assume that the usage of the people controls the grammar, and that we should note differences in usage levels, we can turn to two recent studies of present-day English for information on *who* and *whom*. In his investigation of the serious writings (letters, not literature) of thousands of Americans, Charles C. Fries discovered that the interrogative *who* is preferred to *whom* when the pronoun is in "subjective territory," i.e., when it precedes the verb or preposition.<sup>5</sup> He says: "Expressions such as '*Who* do you refer to' are typical of standard English." When the relative pronoun is the object of a following verb or preposition, Fries found that *whom* was used about two-thirds of the time and *who* about one-third. An example is: "The girl *who* he was to marry." These findings are from the informal written English of college graduates who are leading citizens.

The *Linguistic Atlas of New England* describes many features of the spoken language of over four hundred citizens of New England, chosen as representative of the native population. Map 627 describes the interrogative pronoun in the sentences "*Whom* (or *who*) do you want?" and "*Whom* (or *who*) did you talk to?" Only 5 per cent of the informants used *whom* in either sentence, and less than 3 per cent used *whom* spontaneously in both. Of the

<sup>1</sup> Alma Blount and Clark S. Northup, *Grammar and Usage* (New York, 1933), p. 192.

<sup>2</sup> Edwin C. Woolley and Franklin W. Scott, *College Handbook of Composition* (Boston, 1944), p. 212.

<sup>3</sup> Homer A. Watt, Oscar Cargill, and William Charvat, *New Highways in College Composition* (New York, 1945), p. 940.

<sup>4</sup> Albert H. Marckwardt and Fred G. Walcott, *Facts about Current English Usage* (New York, 1938), pp. 35, 80.

<sup>5</sup> Charles C. Fries, *American English Grammar* (New York, 1940), pp. 95-96.

people with superior education, less than one-fourth used *whom*. Map 628 reports the relative pronoun (*who*, *whom*) in the sentences "I don't know *whom* (or *who*) you mean" and "He didn't tell me *whom* (or *who*) he voted for." Only 4 per cent used *whom* spontaneously in either sentence, and only 1 per cent in both. None of the least-educated people used *whom*, and less than one-third of the better-educated used it. *Whom* in these positions is practically obsolete in the spoken English of New England, except in the speech of a minority of the people who have had extensive formal schooling.<sup>6</sup> Neither Fries nor the *Atlas* reports on formal (literary) English; presumably *whom* is still the preferred form in elevated diction.

These findings can be summarized as follows: (1) In cultivated and popular informal English both *who* and *whom* are "correct" as interrogatives in the objective when the pronoun precedes the verb or preposition. (2) In cultivated and popular informal English both *who* and *whom* are "correct" as relatives in the objective when the pronoun precedes the verb or preposition (with *whom* more prevalent in the written English of more cultivated people). Handbooks and grammars which insist on *whom* in the objective preceding the verb or preposition are either (a) out of date or (b) descriptive of formal written English (and should be consulted only for formal written grammar).

H. O. M., of Indiana, writes to point out, rightly, that many "incomplete" sentences are meaningful and effective only because the context supplies a part of the meaning. He then suggests that a sentence like "He told me about it" (discussed in the December "Current English Forum") may be usefully analyzed by inserting an understood element, such as *a story* or *the facts*, to be analyzed as the direct object.

Supplying "understood" objects, subjects, and connectives is a time-honored de-

vice of normative grammar, which assumes that formal written English or an idealized formal English is the real language and that shortened constructions can be filled out to conform to the fuller constructions. Particularly is this device used when sentences being diagrammed do not fit neatly into the most common patterns. However, it is the inclination of the conductors of this Forum to prefer descriptive grammar, which tries to describe the language habits, and only the language habits, that actually occur.

There may be a need for a scientist who will study the whole of a situation involving communication, including grammar as one of several factors to be studied. Propaganda analysts, reading experts, and some of the new semanticists seem to be working in that direction. But modern scientific grammar holds to the basic assumption that grammar must describe and analyze the language *used*, not the language that might have been used.

If we include in our description elements which do not occur but which we say "the writer had in mind," we embark on a dangerous course of guessing. The writer or reader may have an *idea* which makes an elliptical sentence intelligible, but diagrams do not classify ideas; they classify *words*. Whenever we invent an "understood" expression, we choose one from a number of expressions that might fit the occasion; and these possible expressions need not be grammatically similar. It is inconsistent to define the grammarian's job as the analysis of language and then allow him to include nonlinguistic data (such as context) in his description.

One result of such procedure is to give the pupil the false impression that ordinary English is "faulty" and needs to be revised by the grammarian before it is studied. This is derogatory to the marvelous complexity and elasticity of living English syntax and begets an unhealthy attitude toward the rich resources of the language.

J. B. McM.

<sup>6</sup> Hans Kurath (ed.), *Linguistic Atlas of New England*, Vol. III, Part II (Providence, 1943), Maps 627, 628.

## ***Council News and Comment***

### ***Program***

## ***Thirty-fifth Annual Meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English***

***Radisson Hotel, Minneapolis, Minnesota***

***November 22, 23, 24, 1945***

**\***

**CONVENTION THEME: "THE EMERGING ENGLISH CURRICULUM"**

**\***

### **THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 22**

**MEETING OF THE COMMISSION ON THE ENGLISH CURRICULUM, 9:00-12:00 A.M.**  
**(Pre-Convention Session of the Commission also held on Wednesday, November 21)**

**LUNCHEON MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, 12:30-2:00 P.M.**

**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2:30-5:30 P.M.**  
**(All members of the Council are invited to attend this meeting)**

**GENERAL SESSION: "BASIC AIMS OF ENGLISH INSTRUCTION," 8:00-10:00 P.M.**

**Presiding, Helene W. Hartley, Syracuse University, First Vice-President of the Council**

**Greetings—Prudence Cutright, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Minneapolis; James E. Marshall, Superintendent of Schools, St. Paul**

**President's Address: The Function of English Instruction in Education for Democracy—Harold A. Anderson, University of Chicago**

**New Horizons for the Language Arts—John J. DeBoer, Editor, *Elementary English Review*, Roosevelt College of Chicago**

**College English and General Education—Tremaine McDowell, University of Minnesota**



## FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 23

GENERAL SESSION: "THE ENGLISH CURRICULUM IN PERSPECTIVE," 9:30-11:30 A.M.

*Presiding*, Harold A. Anderson, University of Chicago, President of the Council

At the Elementary Level—Dora V. Smith, University of Minnesota

At the High-School Level—Robert C. Pooley, University of Wisconsin

At the College Level—Roy P. Basler, University of Arkansas

## FRIDAY AFTERNOON CONFERENCES, 1:30-3:30 P.M.

1. *Teaching Pupils How To Read*

*Presiding*, Mary Ethel Thurston, Anderson Senior High School, Anderson, Indiana

Broadening Experiences through Reading in the Elementary School—Constance McCullough, Western Reserve University

Teaching High-School Pupils To Improve Their Reading Ability—Helene W. Hartley, Syracuse University, First Vice-President of the Council

G.I. Methods of Teaching Reading—Paul A. Witty, Northwestern University

*Discussion Leaders*: Gwen Horsman, Detroit Public Schools; Paul Farmer, Boys' High School, Atlanta, Georgia; Amanda M. Ellis, Colorado College, Colorado Springs; Marion Glendenning, Rochester (Minn.) Junior High School

2. *The Art and Craft of Written Expression*

*Presiding*, Porter G. Perrin, Colgate University, Chairman of the College Section of the Council

Guiding Writing Activities in the Elementary School (Speaker to be announced)

How Secondary-School Students Learn To Write—Lou LaBrant, New York University

Knowledges and Skills Expected of College Entering Students—Dana O. Jensen, Washington University, St. Louis

*Discussion Leaders*: Mary D. Reed, Indiana State Teachers College, Terre Haute; Neal Cross, Colorado State College of Education, Greeley; James T. Hillhouse, University of Minnesota

3. *Guiding the Development of Good Speech Habits*

*Presiding* (To be announced later)

Some Practical Suggestions for Developing the Speaking Ability of Elementary-School Pupils—Harold Westlake, Northwestern University

Guiding Group and Individual Speech Activities in the Secondary School—Harlen M. Adams, Stanford University

The Function of the Specialist Teacher of Speech—Bryng Bryngelson, University of Minnesota

*Discussion Leaders*: Maude Staudenmayer, Milwaukee Public Schools; Wesley Wiksell, Stephens College, Columbia, Missouri; Marie Holmes, Garfield and Hendricks Schools, St. Paul; Mrs. Berenice Rutherford, Dowling School, Minneapolis

#### 4. *The Art of Intelligent Listening*

*Presiding*, Eugene E. Seubert, Normandy High School, St. Louis

Listening Activities in the Elementary School—Althea Beery, Cincinnati Public Schools

Listening Behavior in the Secondary School—George W. Sullivan, Long Island City High School, New York

Critical Listening is Fundamental to a Liberal Education—E. A. Cross, Colorado State College of Education, Greeley

*Discussion Leaders*: Hardy R. Finch, Greenwich High School, Greenwich, Connecticut; Howard Gilkinson, University of Minnesota; Constance Howe, Murray High School, St. Paul

#### 5. *Developing Understanding of Essential Principles of Grammar*

*Presiding*, Sister Mary Louise, Webster College, Webster Groves, Missouri

Resolving Differing Opinions about the Teaching of Grammar and Usage—Rachel Salisbury, Milton College, Milton, Wisconsin

Teaching Grammar and Usage in Relation to Speech and Writing—Luella B. Cook, Minneapolis Public Schools

Building an English Language Usage Program—Edna Sterling, Seattle Public Schools, Seattle, Washington

*Discussion Leaders*: Harold B. Allen, University of Minnesota; Harry A. Domincovich, Germantown Friends School, Philadelphia; Jesse Taylor, Hennepin County Schools, Minnesota

#### 6. *Literature and the Individual*

*Presiding*, Blandford Jennings, Clayton (Mo.) High School

Literature for Personal Growth—W. Wilbur Hatfield, Chicago Teachers College, Editor, *English Journal* and *College English*, Secretary-Treasurer of the Council

Intercultural Emphasis through Comparative Literature (Speaker to be announced)

Fallacy of Free Reading as an Approach to Appreciation—Bertha Handlan, University of Colorado, Boulder

*Discussion Leaders*: Sister Maris Stella, St. Catherine's College, Minneapolis; Irene Hayner, University of Minnesota; Mary E. Healy, Marshall High School, St. Paul; Katherine H. Robertson, Jordan Junior High School, St. Paul

#### 7. *Student Writing for Publication*

(Program planned co-operatively by the N.C.T.E. and the  
National Association of Journalism Directors)

*Presiding*, Olive Allen, Central High School, St. Paul, President, National Association of Journalism Directors

Guiding the Citizenship Program through the School Newspaper—Thelma McAndless, Roosevelt High School, Ypsilanti, Michigan

Planning and Publishing the School Newspaper—Mrs. Hazel Pullman, Garnett High School, Garnett, Kansas

Reflecting the Community through the Yearbook—Glenn Hanson, University of Minnesota, Editor, *Scholastic Editor*

*Discussion Leaders:* Gunnar Horn, Benson High School, Omaha

#### 8. *Radio and Audio-visual Aids to Communication and Interpretation*

KSTP Studio in Radio City Theater, Ninth Street and La Salle Avenue

*Presiding,* Nathan A. Miller, Little River Junior High School, Miami, Florida, Chairman of the Council Committee on Audio-visual Aids

*Demonstration:* Use of Radio in the English Class—G. Robert Carlsen, University High School, Minneapolis

*English and Radio Today*—Tracy F. Tyler, University of Minnesota

*Cinema Syndrome*—Max J. Herzberg, Weequahic High School, Newark, New Jersey, Chairman of the Council Committee on Radio and Photoplays

*Discussion Leaders:* William Scanlan, Galtier School, St. Paul; Bernice E. Eich, Miller Vocational High School, Minneapolis

#### 9. *Research Conclusions and Uses in the Teaching of English*

(Program planned co-operatively by the N.C.T.E. and the National Conference on Research in English)

*Presiding,* Ethel Mabie Falk, Madison, Wisconsin, President, National Conference on Research in English

(Topics and speakers to be announced later)

#### 10. *Supervising Teaching and Learning*

*Presiding,* Miriam B. Booth, Supervisor of Secondary School English, Erie, Pennsylvania, Chairman of the Council Committee on Supervision

*The Supervisor as an Intelligent Guide in Curriculum Planning*—Angela M. Broening, Forest Park High School, Baltimore

*Improving in In-College and In-Service Training of Teachers of English*—Lennox Grey, Teachers College, Columbia University

*Objective and Sympathetic Supervision*—Helen Olson, Broadway High School, Seattle, Washington

*Discussion Leaders:* Marquis Shattuck, Detroit Public Schools; Irvin C. Poley, Germantown Friends School, Philadelphia; Edith L. McNaughton, Mary Helen Lindsay School, St. Paul

ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING, 4:00 P.M.

(All members of the Council are urged to attend this meeting)

ANNUAL BANQUET, 6:30 P.M.

*Toastmaster:* Charles J. Turck, President, Macalester College

*Words and People*—Ruth Suckow, Novelist

*Selected Poems*—Robert Penn Warren, Poet

(Third speaker to be announced)

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 10:00-11:00 P.M.

(All members of the Council are invited to attend this meeting)

★

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 24**

**BREAKFAST FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS REPRESENTATIVES, 8:00 A.M.**

(For public relations representatives only)

**SECTION MEETINGS, 9:00-11:30 A.M.**

**1. Elementary Section A**

**"THE LANGUAGE ARTS IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL"**

*Presiding*, Loretta Antl, Madison School, Lakewood, Ohio

Developing Reading Readiness in the Primary Grades—Lucille Harrison, Colorado College of Education, Greeley

The Language Arts Survey in the Wisconsin Elementary Schools—Robert C. Pooley, University of Wisconsin

Choral Speaking in the Elementary School—Gwen Owen, Macalester College, St. Paul  
Discussion

**2. Elementary Section B**

**"THE LANGUAGE ARTS IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL"**

*Presiding*, Walter Anderson, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Minneapolis

Guided Reading in the Elementary Schools of Glencoe, Illinois—Kathleen G. Ammerman, Central School, Glencoe, Illinois

Developing Language Power in the Primary Grades—Ruth Strickland, Indiana University

Language Arts in the Daily Experience of the Intermediate-Grade Pupil—Elizabeth Lehr, Colorado State College of Education, Greeley

Discussion

**3. High-School Section**

**"CREATING MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING THROUGH EXPERIENCES IN READING,  
WRITING, SPEAKING, AND LISTENING"**

*Presiding*, Ward H. Green, Tulsa, Oklahoma, Chairman of the High-School Section of the Council

Reading—Ruth Mary Weeks, Paseo High School, Kansas City, Missouri

Listening—Nathan Miller, Little River Junior High School, Miami, Florida

Writing—Marion C. Sheridan, New Haven High School, New Haven, Connecticut

Speaking—Mark Neville, John Burroughs School, St. Louis, Missouri, Second Vice-President of the Council



**Panel: Implications for English Curriculum Content and Methods of Instruction**

John Gehlmann, Oak Park and River Forest Township High School, Oak Park, Illinois;  
Helen J. Hanlon, Department of Instruction, Detroit Public Schools; Marian Pettis,  
Lewis and Clark High School, Spokane, Washington; Marion Edman, Detroit Public  
Schools

**4. College Section****"APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF LITERATURE"**

**Presiding,** Henning Larsen, University of Illinois

The Social Approach—Frederick R. White, Beloit College

The Direct Approach—Thomas C. Pollock, New York University

Notes on Approaches, from the Curriculum Study—Porter G. Perrin, Colgate University,  
Chairman of the College Section of the Council, Assistant Director of the Curriculum  
Commission

**ANNUAL LUNCHEON, 12:30-3:00 P.M.**

**Presiding,** Harold A. Anderson, President of the Council

Music—The Madrigal Club, Harding High School, St. Paul; Mary J. Roder, Director

Immigrant and Pioneer in Ballad and Song—Theodore Blegen, Dean of the Graduate School,  
University of Minnesota

A Bridge of Books—Virginia Kirkus, Critic, Author, Lecturer

**CONVENTION NOTES**

The Radisson Hotel is the Convention Headquarters. A limited number of rooms are available in this hotel. Guests who are unable to obtain rooms at the Radisson are advised to secure reservations at other hotels through the Minneapolis Hotel Association Housing Bureau, 200 Builders Exchange, Minneapolis. Because all hotels are crowded in these times, the Convention Bureau strongly urges guests to share their rooms. Kindly indicate when you make your reservation the person with whom you wish to share a room. If you have not done so, make your reservation at once.

If you have examined the preliminary announcement of the program which appears above, you will undoubtedly agree that it is a very strong program. The officers of the Council planned the program soon after the Convention last year, but because of travel restrictions they were unable to issue all the invitations until the lifting of restrictions a few weeks ago. Copy for the Council journals must be submitted several weeks in advance of publication. Consequently, not all speakers are announced in this program. You may rest assured that by the time the journal reaches you the full-scale convention program will be complete.

The Local Committee on Arrangements, of which Dr. Dora V. Smith is the able chairman, has been hard at work for several months to make the Thirty-fifth Annual Convention of the Council a great success. There is almost unbounded enthusiasm in the Twin Cities for the 1945 Convention. We shall look for you there.

HAROLD A. ANDERSON  
*President*

## Summary and Report

THE EXIGENCIES OF MAKEUP LAST month almost completely crowded out the Summary and Report. Since the summer crop of literary essays was bountiful and good, we are carrying over into this issue the most important references.

THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN REVIEW initiates a new series of "examinations" of authors whose works have had considerable influence upon contemporary writing, in its summer number, with an essay on "Thomas Mann: The Artist as Bourgeois." This is by Charles Nieder, a former member of the staffs of *PM* and the *New Yorker*. Subsequent examinations will be made of Franz Kafka, Katherine Anne Porter, Ernest Hemingway, and André Gide. The same issue also inaugurates a new policy in the *Review's* book section of presenting one "feature" review in each number. The first is of *An Essay on Man*, by Ernst Cassirer, reviewed by René Wellek, who uses it as a focal point for an essay on *Theory of Symbolism*.

THE SUBJECT OF SYMBOLISM HAS currently preoccupied at least two other writers. W. Y. Tindall contributes a rational analysis of "The Symbolism of W. B. Yeats" to the summer *Accent*, in which Yeats appears to have been less transcendental than is commonly thought; and Cleanth Brooks, with particular attention to *Macbeth*, in the *Yale Review*, discusses "Shakespeare as a Symbolist Poet."

IN *INTERIM*, THE NEW QUARTERLY of the Pacific Northwest, just starting its second year, D. S. Savage writes strikingly on "The Status of Proletarian Poetry."

"READING CLINICS ANATOMIZED" by O. R. Bontrager, in the summer *ETC.*,

will be enjoyed and read by possibly many teachers of English. Mr. Bontrager was formerly the director of the Reading Clinic, State Teachers College, California, Pennsylvania, and more recently, as a lieutenant in the U.S.N.R., a commanding officer of a Navy V-12 unit. The subtitle of his essay is, *Or, How Did You Learn To Skate?* This describes the first half of the essay, which is a genial satire on the methods of reading clinics. The point is: we do everything except have our students read in action. The second part is a friendly but penetrating analysis of the current sins of educational isolationism with reference to reading. The same issue of *ETC.* carries a reprint of "General Semantics in the Classroom" by Charles Glicksberg, which appeared originally in the *English Journal* (October, 1944).

AN EXPERIMENT IN CREATIVE writing is being conducted at Briarcliff Junior College by the publication of the *Briarcliff Quarterly*, which presents something new in the field of student publications. As Ordway Tead writes in an early issue: "There is no easy body of prescriptions for an improved educational process which steps out beyond conventional classwork. But that a publication which is interesting, is pioneering, and is reflective of the literary concerns of a new generation sampled internationally can be realized, in and through the educational influences of a college setting, will, I trust, be established." One difference between this and other student publications is that its focal point is not the campus. It is an *international* review, and student articles from other colleges both in this country and abroad are solicited by its student editors. Material received in French or Spanish is translated with the aid of students who are taking these language courses at the college. Faculty members about the

country might inform able students of this publishing channel. The *Briarcliff Quarterly* is edited and managed by students under the direction of Norman Macleod. It publishes fiction, articles, literary criticism, poetry, and book notices. From time to time developments in painting, sculpture, music, and the theater are appraised. Art reproductions are a regular feature.

**A BETTER EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM** is one of two major improvements the average soldier wants to see in his postwar America. (The other is the elimination of racial and religious discrimination.) This is the conclusion of the managing editor of *Yank*, the enlisted man's newspaper. His opinion is based on the letters soldiers write to the *Yank* department entitled "The Soldier Speaks." Typical comments from soldiers, as quoted in a recent Sunday *New York Times* article are:

"It is obvious that the schools have failed to educate us to think constructively on any subject that is not absolutely personal," wrote one sergeant in a tank company. "How can you have ideas about internationalism and how can you expect a fair and lasting peace when the only reading you have done is Superman and the captions under the pictures of movie queens? If our people were really educated, would we have allowed ourselves to be so unprepared for a war of this magnitude?"

A corporal in France, who said that world peace would never be maintained until America became better educated, suggested new methods of teaching and uniform educational systems.

That corporal, no doubt, along with many of the rest of us, will be encouraged to hear that the first step toward uniform international education probably is being made this month in London, where a United Nations Conference on Educational and Cultural Cooperation is being held. The conference will consider the text for a proposed constitution for a United Nations agency in this field. If established, this agency would become one of the group of specialized agen-

cies under the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

The need for such an agency is graphically illustrated in a timely pamphlet on education and international organization just issued in the "Headline Series" of the Foreign Policy Association. Its title is "Only by Understanding." Its author, William G. Carr, is associate secretary of the N.E.A. and secretary of its educational policies commission. Mr. Carr discusses the different patterns in various systems of national education which developed between the first and the second World War. He also outlines the efforts made during that period by individuals and groups to compel a governmental international education organization. He further discusses the action of the League of Nations Assembly in deleting "education," the private efforts of individuals, and corporations such as the Institute for International Education, and the problems of the war years and the future. The pamphlet is a valuable summary of historical events which should have taught us by now that educational isolationism does not preserve the peace.

**SEVERAL OF THE SUMMER QUARTERLIES**, in particular the *American Scholar*, the *Antioch Review*, and *Common Ground*, are worth a thoughtful reading from cover to cover. The *American Scholar* carries, *inter alia*, an article by Oscar James Campbell on "Miss Webster and *The Tempest*," another by Meribeth Cameron on "Chinese Problems and American Opinion," and a third by I. L. Kandel on "The Humanities in Search of Students."

**THE REASON MANY NEW YORK** critics seem to have been disappointed in *The Tempest* as a play (though not in its production), Professor Campbell believes, is that they remembered not Shakespeare's play but "their [own] version of a legendary work created by the romantic critics of the early nineteenth century and embellished by the intellectual heirs of those enthusiasts down to the present day." He, himself, is not of



those who would read Shakespeare's biography from the play or philosophize from it. He maintains that the "essential nature of *The Tempest*—and indeed of almost all of its diverse features—stands revealed if it be considered as an exalted version of a variety of pastoral play that was very popular in Italy in the sixteenth century." After giving evidence to prove his thesis, he concludes that Miss Webster, also, saw in *The Tempest* "the same features that appealed to Shakespeare when he became acquainted with the Italian pastoral," namely, a play which offered a variety of entertainment from low comedy to fantasy and court masque. And, from Professor Campbell's point of view, that is a far better play than the one conceived in the imaginations of the critics.

"THE HUMANITIES IN SEARCH OF Students" is important reading for both secondary-school and college teachers. Professor Kandel believes that the tenor of the widespread discussions and revaluations of the humanities seems to indicate that, "whether as separate disciplines or in survey and interdisciplinary courses," the humanities "will find an assured place in the college curriculum." What has been largely ignored in the discussions of reorientation of education at the college level, however, he continues, is "the kind of preparation that students entering college will have received." He cites as an example the fact that the Johns Hopkins University's Committee on Postwar Policy found itself confronted with the question: "How shall we bridge the gap between inadequate high-school training and a program of study that is really collegiate in character?" In the discussions of the committee, "it developed that most applicants are weak in two basic subjects—English and mathematics." In analyzing the committee report, *What the High Schools Ought To Teach* (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education), Professor Kandel points out that the committee recommends "concentration on reading, work experience, and social studies" but "makes no reference to the desirability of

developing in students habits of working steadily at their studies." In the report of the Educational Policies Commission of the National Education Association, *Education for All American Youth*, he notes that "the academic studies are now considered to be vocational and not a contribution to general education, and that the high school student is somehow expected to know 'the things needed to do what he wants to do.'" He concludes that, whereas "in the past the nonacademic students were the forgotten youth, in the future the position may be reversed and the forgotten youth may be those who have both the ability and interest to engage in academic studies." Professor Kandel feels that the programs recommended in these two reports "from the point of view of the needs both of individuals and American culture . . . tend to overemphasize work experience, vocational preparation, and immersion in the immediately contemporary and even local through social studies." This trend in secondary-school planning concurrent with the present trend in thought of those concerned with education at the college level, of emphasizing the importance of preserving the humanities in American culture, presents a picture of two streams which ought to be flowing into each other instead of flowing parallel and in opposite directions. Nor does the fact that *Planning for American Youth* makes no provision for a representative of college education in the proposed Commission of Postwar Education give hope for co-ordinated planning between the high schools and colleges. Hence Professor Kandel's conclusion that if the recognition of the importance of preserving the humanities is not extended from the college to the secondary school, it may not be long before the humanities will be in search of students.

"THE BLUES OF RICHARD WRIGHT," by Ralph Ellison, formerly an editor of the *Negro Quarterly* and now in the Marines, is an eminently distinguished piece of literary criticism. It, too, is in the *Antioch Review* for summer. Ellison's purpose is to discuss



some of the cultural sources of *Black Boy* in the hope of answering "those critics who would make of the book a miracle and of its author, a mystery." The result is an illuminating psychological study of the writer, who, according to Ellison, "outlined for himself a dual role: To discover and depict the meaning of Negro experience; and to reveal to both Negroes and whites, those problems of a psychological and emotional nature which arise between them when they strive for mutual understanding." The "blues" Ellison defines as "an autobiographical chronicle of personal catastrophe expressed lyrically." Their attraction, he says, lies in this, that they at once express both the agony of life and the possibility of conquering it through sheer toughness of spirit. Wright's most important achievement, Ellison feels, is that he has "converted the American Negro impulse toward self annihilation and 'going-under-ground' into a will to confront the world, to evaluate his experience honestly and throw his findings unashamedly into the guilty conscience of America." But there is more, much more, to this perceptive study, which should be read in its entirety.

THE EDITOR OF THE *ANTIOCH REVIEW*, Paul Bixler, also contributes an interesting article on "Marshall Field's Free Enterprises." With monopoly the central problem in American daily journalism, Field's efforts to maintain individuality and freedom of expression and at the same time to compete in a fierce market, is worthy of description. Mr. Bixler here evaluates *PM* and the work of Max Lerner, its chief editorial writer, and of the *Chicago Sun*, with reference to Mr. Field.

A CLOSELY RELATED ARTICLE, "Freedom of the Press for Whom?" by Earl Vance, appears in the summer *Virginia Quarterly Review*. As Mr. Vance points out, the battle of the freedom of the press as a right of citizenship is no longer one to wrest more such freedom from government; it is to make freedom of the press more of a

reality for the average citizen who cannot own a newspaper, by curbing the monopoly of the small number of corporations and individuals "who, as owners, enjoy the only real freedom of the press today." The picture of the actual freedom of the press today is this, he states: "Nearly nine-tenths of all American communities are free to read the news according to one newspaper, which is free to present it with due regard to its own business interest and to business interests in general by whose favor alone the newspaper survives." Moreover, almost all news of national scope is channeled through Hearst, Scripps-Howard, or the Associated Press. Among the attacks which Vance suggests might be made on the present monopoly is the development of an informed public by the study in schools and colleges of the nature, operation, and effect of the press.

An implementation of this idea is in part suggested by Maxwell Goldberg in his article, "Student Journalists and Democratic Leadership," in the May *Journal of Higher Education*, in which he discusses student publications as the prototype of a free press in a democracy.

ANOTHER ASPECT OF MONOPOLISTIC power as it affects information coming to the average citizen over the air, is discussed in *Hearing and Believing*, by Dixon Wecter, published in three instalments in the June, July, and August *Atlantic Monthly*. This is another "must" article for reading. Generally speaking, it concerns the influence of the radio reporter and news analyst in shaping public opinion. In the June issue, Wecter examines the relationships between the F.C.C., the networks, the radio stations, and those companies which sponsor the commentators. In the June and July issues he scrutinizes the records of the commentators themselves, their reliability, their prejudices, and their mistakes. Among those brought before the bar are Swing, Harsch, Kaltenborn, Elliot, Winchell, Pearson, Heatter, and numerous others. So great is the power these men wield that, according to Wecter, "it is conceivable that

some day a commentator with extraordinary gifts as a demagogue might draw a following so large, so fanatic, as to lift him beyond any sponsor's control." If America ever gets a demagogue, Mr. Wecter thinks that "whatever his other talents he will almost certainly be a great radio artist." Radio's challenge to education, therefore, for this reason alone, is very great. Should, for example, the twenty-nine different states known to be seriously considering the possibilities of developing state-wide educational FM broadcasting systems implement their present plans, the temptations to demagoguery could well be lessened.

**PROFESSOR CAMERON'S TEMPERATE** historical review of the internal problems of China during the last one hundred and fifty years, and American reaction to them, traces the formation and growth of the now American habit of alternately underestimating and overestimating the Chinese. She concludes: "The revolutionary process in China is experiencing not death, but rebirth. Any American policy which assumes that China will be politically incompetent and internationally insignificant takes a short view, is conceived in error and will lead to trouble."

**AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF A. E. Housman** appears in *PMLA* for June. This is a critical study which effects a survey of Housman estimates by scholar- and poet-critics and a survey of all critical ideas and

problems of contemporary criticism as focused upon a poet of the preceding age. Valuable if you are interested in the above.

**HOBART AND WILLIAM SMITH COLLEGES** at Geneva, New York, have recently adopted new methods for attacking the problems of freshmen whose English is not all it should be. Spot testing by means of 35-mm. photography of each student's use of English throughout the college course and the establishment of a special faculty advisory committee to check progress are two of them. Development of good habits in writing and speaking English will be emphasized in the freshman year. Voice-recordings will also be used to aid students in correcting speech flaws. The photo-records of work submitted by students will be projected on a screen both in the English classroom and before the advisory committee. The advisory committee will use the spot tests to determine the extent of each student's transfer of English habits to work in other academic fields, particularly during the sophomore, junior, and senior years. Failure to meet the minimum standards in English will result in the reassignment of students to special writing and speaking clinics.

**NATIONAL CATHOLIC BOOK WEEK**, for 1945, will be held November 4-10. Its theme will be "Keys to World Peace—Christian Books." This is a project of the Catholic Library Association and has been observed annually since 1940.

### *Announcements*

**THE DODD, MEAD INTERCOLLEGIATE** Literary Fellowship has been established for men and women who are students in American colleges and universities and who wish to become professional authors. The Fellowship is awarded on the basis of promise shown in the project submitted and does not necessarily require a completed manuscript. The amount of the award is \$1,500. Candidates must be regularly enrolled students in an American or Canadian

college or university. All applications and projects must be sent to the publisher by April 1, 1946. For further information write Dodd, Mead and Company, 432 Fourth Avenue, New York 16.

Twenty national, international, and undesignated fellowships of \$1,500 each, and several smaller ones, are being offered for graduate study or research during 1946-47 by the American Association of University Women. These are awarded, in general,

to candidates who have completed two years of residence work for the Doctor's degree or who have already received the degree. Applications and supporting materials must reach the office in Washington

not later than December 15, 1945. For detailed information address the Secretary, Committee on Fellowship Awards, American Association of University Women, 1634 I Street, N.W., Washington 6, D.C.

### *Useful Documents*

*Alexander Pope: A List of Critical Studies Published from 1895 to 1944.* By James Edward Tobin. Cosmopolitan Science and Art Service Co., Inc., 638 Lexington Avenue, New York 22. Pp. 30. \$0.75.

*The Baconian Lectures on Aims and Progress of Research in the State University of Iowa, 1944.* University of Iowa, 1945. Pp. 134.

*Fun with Poetry: Musical Settings of Ballads and Folk Songs with Some Suggestions on Choral Speaking, Based on Materials in the "Literature and Life Series."* Scott, Foresman & Co. Pp. 32. Free to any English teacher who does not have a copy. Additional copies, \$0.25.

*An Index to Professional Literature on Reading and Related Topics.* By Emmett and Thelma Betts. American Book Co. Pp. 138. \$1.50.

*Student Personnel Work in the Postwar College.* "American Council on Education Studies," Series VI, No. 6. American Council on Education, 744 Jackson Place, Washington 6, D.C. Pp. 98. \$0.75.

*On General and Liberal Education: A Symposium.* Bulletin No. 1 of the Association for General and Liberal Education. Address: Joseph P. Blickensderfer, 1427 Webster Street, N.W., Washington 11, D.C. Pp. 127. (Some of the contributors are Mortimer J. Adler, Jacques Barzun, Norman Cousins, Walter D. Fuller, Aldous Huxley, and Joseph Wood Krutch.)

*Education of Teachers: Selected Bibliography, October, 1935—January, 1941.* By Benjamin W. Frazier. Bulletin 1941, No. 2, Federal Security Agency, U.S. Office of Education. Pp. 60. \$0.10.

## Books

### SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS ILLUMINED<sup>1</sup>

These monumental volumes, first of all, present a collation of the texts of more than fifty of the most important editions of the sonnets, with occasional variants from twenty-seven other editions. Notes and comments from these editions and from other discussions of the sonnets follow; they have been selected with fine discrimination and a scrupulous attempt to present the variety of interpretations. Sometimes these comments are quite extensive, in the case of difficult sonnets like the fifty-fifth, the ninety-ninth, and the one hundred and thirty-fifth, running to as much as four pages of fine print and, in the case of the one hundred and seventh, to seven pages. Many of these notes are, of course, contradictory, and many seem curiously misguided; but for the student of Shakespeare's sonnets they present a glittering store of stimulating, though sometimes strange, ideas.

For most readers of the sonnets, however, the second volume will become the indispensable part of Mr. Rollins' work. Here he summarizes and organizes the multifarious outpourings on the Dark Lady, Master W. H., the Rival Poet, the order of the sonnets, "The Question of Homosexuality," the date of composition, and *Willobie his avisa*, as well as less controversial matters like texts, vogue, and musical settings. While the deepest impression is made in Volume I by Professor Rollins' vast industry, the second volume makes more display of even rarer qualities. The clarity of his summaries and his consistent sanity in dealing with the great variety of theories and romancings which must be reviewed in this volume are wholly admirable.

<sup>1</sup> Hyder E. Rollins (ed.), *A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare: The Sonnets*. 2 vols. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. \$8.50 per volume.

Shakespeare, because of the emirance of his work and the comparative obscurity of his life, has long exercised a compelling fascination for enthusiasts whose zeal outruns their learning and their judgment. Such fervid ones have, of course, found their greatest rewards in the sonnets, and many of their fondest imaginings have been committed to print; indeed, even the most competent scholars often feel a touch of the frenzy when contemplating the sonnets. Rollins' problems in considering the literature of the sonnets has consequently been unusually exacting. The temptation to pontificate or to ridicule is almost irresistible. To retain a sober impartiality while reviewing the fictions about William Hughes, Christian Bruce, Mary Fitton, William Hathaway, and Anne Davenant is too much to ask, yet Rollins is remarkably just. The orderly marshalling of theory after theory with occasional succinct and often illuminating comments is a fine demonstration of the value a true variorum edition can have.

For the teacher of Shakespeare who is regularly confronted with the honest but silly questions of young admirers attempting to understand "the real man" Shakespeare, these volumes ought to prove a very present help in time of trouble.

G. E. BENTLEY

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

### LEARNING OUR LANGUAGE

A small planographed volume, *Learning Our Language*<sup>1</sup> is prepared as a trial text for freshman English classes by the head of the English department of Drake University.

<sup>1</sup> Thomas F. Dunn, *Learning Our Language*. St. Louis: John S. Swift Co., Inc., 1944. Pp. viii+186.



Part I of the text discusses the symbolic nature of language, report language, verbal fictions, emotive words, and semantic changes. Part II discusses the various levels of language, language conventions, dialects, slang, etc. Part III is a brief history of the English language. Part IV discusses the sentence, various ways to write a paragraph, note-taking, the whole composition, footnotes, etc. Throughout the text are suggestions for oral and written work of various kinds. In his statement "To the Teacher," the author says that the student "should feel a growing release from the fictions and the feelings of demagoguery, and a growing mastery of language in its laudable social uses."

The materials of the text are selected and presented from the point of view which has been developing since the work of Ogden and Richards twenty years ago. Use is made also of the writings of Korzybski, Hayakawa, Chase, Walpole, and other recent writers in the field of semantics. The method is somewhat inductive, and the emphasis is upon the study of language rather than upon rules and abstraction about language.

The line of thought development runs from the nature of language as a kind of human behavior, through the symbolic functions of language and the history of the language, to an application of the principles of language to the study of literature. This progression has been slowly developing in the schools. A recent statement of the general basis for this approach can be found in *An Essay on Man* by Ernst Cassirer.

Freshmen entering college English work are introduced immediately into the most interesting phases of language study and to materials which have not as yet come into high-school courses in English. This method removes one of the deadening aspects of the usual freshman course—"just some more of the same"—to which students have so often objected. The book places emphasis on oral as well as on written language. The short bibliographies will serve to open up an interesting field for students who have

never before thought about the nature of language. These bibliographies might well be extended.

The author says that the book was prepared hurriedly. It should be accepted as a beginning of an interesting and significant approach to the problem of freshman English.

The freshmen whom I have met during the last forty years need much more inductive work in the analysis of sentence idioms and in punctuation than this text provides or suggests.

I am entirely sympathetic with the effort of the author to present to freshmen this kind of study of language. About 1908 I began a similar course, based upon the same ideas as those presented at the beginning of this book. Since that time I have tried to lure, drive, cajole, induce, or force some teaching of these facts about language in both high school and college. I wish Professor Dunn success in his laudable undertaking.

V. C. COULTER

UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

### SPELLING AT COLLEGE LEVEL

*Improve Your Spelling*<sup>1</sup> is a manual or workbook of 125 pages intended for poor spellers on the college level. It might also be very useful to classes of educated immigrants bewildered by English pronunciation and spelling.

Although the authors in the introductory pages seem to be addressing themselves to students who do not "proofread," to those who are inattentive to details in matters other than spelling, and to those who are slovenly in penmanship and pronunciation, the text as it develops presupposes considerable intelligence, rather wide comparative vocabulary, and interest in learning the secrets of word-building.

If the manual were used as supple-

<sup>1</sup> Frances Oralind Triggs and Edwin W. Robbins, *Improve Your Spelling*. New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1944. Pp. 125. \$1.00.

mentary during a semester or even spread over a year, the poor spellers would no doubt improve in spelling habits and profit as would also the more able students in reading comprehension and rate of reading through the natural method of extending vocabulary. Among the devices suggested for self-help is that of the flash card. The student is urged to use the dictionary as an aid but not as a crutch. The student places each misspelled word on a 3 X 5 filing card. On the face he writes the word correctly spelled, and, on the reverse side, two original sentences in which the word is correctly used. At the bottom of the card, as his knowledge of the word grows, he includes synonyms and antonyms.

The text is orderly in arrangement. It opens with pronunciation of vowels and consonants, then proceeds to syllabication, word families, root forms and derivations, and prefixes and suffixes and closes with comprehension testing exercises.

Within each unit the learning procedure is also carefully planned. For instance, in the unit on vowel pronunciation and order, the rules are first carefully analyzed and demonstrated; then guided activities are provided to permit independent practice. The student tests his power of detecting misspelling by correcting it in a continuous narrative. Then he assembles the words he discovered together with those he failed to see in a word chart, on which he also cites the rule for the correct form. As a last step he makes flash cards of the words he failed to detect in proofreading.

With a vigorous teacher and a few good leaders the work with this manual might further scholarship not only in freshman English but in other college subjects through interest in words and how changes in letters here and there make a world of difference in meaning.

ELLEN M. GEYER

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

## In Brief Review

[Mention under this head does not preclude review elsewhere.]

### FOR THE GENERAL READER

*Three Men in New Suits.* By J. B. PRIESTLEY. Harper. \$2.50.

Three recently demobilized soldiers in skimpy new civilian suits return to their English village. They represent aristocracy, the farmer, and the Cockney workman, but they are buddies. What they have fought for, what they find the home folks selfishly planning, their disappointments, and their reactions to civilian life are fearlessly related by Priestley, whose own work for the common good never falters.

*Rooster Crows for Day.* By BEN L. BURMAN. Dutton. \$2.50.

Little Doc, fishboat captain on the Mississippi, pilots a steamer up the Congo with an odd group of companions. Adventurous, with an eerie African feel, and much dark mystery. By the author of *Steamboat Round the Bend* and *Blow for a Landing*.

*Immortal Village.* By DONALD CULROSS PEATTIE. University of Chicago Press. \$2.75.

A revised edition of privately printed *Vence*, with Preface and wood engravings. The story of this French village covers its history from its Neolithic origins to the present. Says the author: "It is worth while to remember that nothing material is indestructible, but the *spirit of man* is."

*Three O'Clock Dinner.* By JOSEPHINE PINCKNEY. Viking. \$2.50.

The author was born in Charleston, of which she writes. The Redcliffs were an old and distinguished family. The Hessenwinkles were back-street Irish, moderately successful; but the daughter of the family had charm, and the Redcliff men fell for it, particularly the democratic younger son, who believed in smashing tradition. A study of social clash, of morals, and of a new day.

*January Thaw.* By BELLAMY PARTRIDGE. Whittlesey House. \$2.75.

The author was born in upstate New York and has written of the people in *Country Lawyer* and *Big Family*. The Gages, city people, bought an old Connecticut house and went in for antiques in a big way. The fun(?) came when a flaw in the title brought the original owners into conflict with the new plumbing and the greenhouse. Human foibles well illustrated.

*Skip to My Lou.* By WILLIAM MARTIN CAMP. Doubleday. \$2.00.

An Ozark mountain family is lured to the shipyards of California, trekking in a homemade trailer.

Characters and ideas are reminiscent of *Grapes of Wrath*.

*Ambulance Driver.* By JOHN DOS PASSOS. Philosophical Library. \$2.00.

Based on Dos Passos' experiences as a front-line ambulance driver in the first World War. The agony of war. Soldiers won't need it; the stay-at-homes do.

*One Destiny: An Epistle to the Christians.* By SOHEM ASCH. Putnam. \$1.50.

The Author of *The Nazarene* and *The Apostle* addresses to his Christian brethren this discussion of a common heritage and a common goal of Christian and Jew.

*Lovely Is the Lee.* By ROBERT GIBBINGS. Dutton. \$3.00.

At a time when really beautiful books are scarce, this one fills a want. The author tells of his rambles through the River Lee country in Ireland. Anecdote, folklore, and choice wood engravings.

*Home Fires Burning.* By ROBERT HENRIQUES. Viking. \$2.50.

Another author writes of the returning British soldier. Who shall be their leader? To what shall they cling? A vigorous, somewhat disturbing book.

*A Stone, a Leaf, a Door.* By THOMAS WOLFE. Scribner's. \$2.50.

Some seventy passages from Wolfe's books arranged as poetry by Sgt. John S. Barnes.

*Animal Fair.* By EVELYN WEST. Lippincott. \$2.75.

A sordid family story: a brilliant, well-educated father whose life is a failure, an ineffectual mother, and six neglected children. But Sandra, a daughter, is different: vital, determined, and hopeful, she meets life gallantly, seeing the people about her as an animal fair.

*The Springfield Plan: A Photographic Record.* By JAMES WATERMAN WISE and ALEXANDER ALLAND. Viking. \$2.50.

How one American community works toward democracy. Started ten years ago, the plan is now followed by a large percentage of the people of the city. 140 pages, 61 photos.

*African Journey.* By ESLANDA GOODE ROBESON. John Day. \$2.50.

The wife of Paul Robeson visited Africa to see for herself the country from which her people came.

This account of her trip is significant. Maps and photos.

*Beneath the Stone.* By GEORGE TABORI. Houghton Mifflin. \$2.50.

The characters are a German major and the Englishman he has captured. German psychology and Germany's hatred and jealousy of England.

*A Treasury of Satire.* By EDGAR JOHNSON. Simon & Schuster. \$3.95.

An anthology of satirical masterpieces, from Aristophanes to Aldous Huxley, with literary and historical backgrounds. Perhaps the first anthology of satire. Good.

*O. Henry Memorial Award Prize Stories of 1945.* Edited by HERSCHELL BRICKELL and MURIEL FULLER. Doubleday. \$2.50.

The twenty-seventh annual volume of the best short stories of the year printed in leading magazines. An excellent opportunity to compare new and old writers, new forms and themes. Of the twenty-two stories, eleven are concerned with war; several deal with race conflicts; all are high in emotionality. *Harper's Bazaar*, the *Atlantic Monthly*, and the *Yale Review* score highest in number of stories and in prize-winners.

*Here Is India.* By JEAN KENNEDY. Scribner's. \$2.75.

The author, born in India, now living in America, has studied the Indian languages and literature. She admits the difficulty of compressing the story of a diversified country into a short volume but gives us a "sampling"—an informative and provocative sampling. Gorgeous end maps, jacket, and photos.

*All Brave Sailors: The Story of S.S. Booker T. Washington.* By JOHN BEECHER. L. B. Fischer. \$2.50.

The crew of the Liberty ship "*Booker T. Washington*" was composed of white, black, brown, and yellow men. Working, playing, and fighting together, they felt no racial barriers.

*The Dawn of Liberation.* By WINSTON CHURCHILL. Little, Brown. \$3.50.

A collection of the Prime Minister's speeches, messages, and broadcasts during the fifth year of the war, including those from Athens, Paris, Moscow, Quebec, and Italy.

*Guerilla Wife.* By LOUISE REID SPENCER. Crowell. \$2.75.

Mrs. Spencer's husband was an American mining engineer in the Philippines when the Japs attacked. With a small band they took to the hills and for twenty-seven months were fugitives. Many of their friends did not escape. Mrs. Spencer has told simply

and forcibly of those months in the jungle, of friends who aided them, and of the ingenuity which kept them alive.

*Tom Paine, America's Godfather, 1737-1809.* By W. E. WOODWARD. Dutton. \$3.50.

The author asserts that Paine has been "the most unjustly maligned figure in our national history." It is his purpose to give a complete picture of Paine. He declares him to be the first champion of the common man, the inspiration of the Declaration of Independence, a man who died in neglected obscurity after a lifelong struggle for the freedoms and rights which we now have in the United States of America.

*Saints and Strangers.* By GEORGE G. WILLISON. Reynal & Hitchcock. \$3.75.

"Being the Lives of the Pilgrim Fathers and Their Friends and Foes; and an Account of Their Posthumous Wanderings in Limbo, Their Final Resurrection and Rise to Glory, and the Strange Pilgrimages of Plymouth Rock."

The author believes that too many myths make the Pilgrims pious, drab people instead of the lusty human men and women which they were. While not a debunking tale, it shows the Pilgrim fathers, mothers, and their offspring fond of worldly pleasures, with "not a drop of blue blood among them." End maps.

*Read 'Em and Weep.* By SIGMUND SPAETH. Arco. \$3.00.

The words and music of two hundred songs that will never grow old. There are old ballads, favorites of the 1800's, Civil War songs, Negro songs, and others. Anecdote, comments, and folklore, with information about the origin of many favorites. "Little Brown Jug," "Father, Dear Father, Come Home with Me Now," "Frankie and Johnnie," are examples. Good fun; old memories revived.

*The Dreamers.* By J. BIGELOW CLARK. Doubleday. \$2.50.

A small group of alien prisoners on the Italian island of Campagna out with their Nazi enemies. Action and excitement.

#### FOR THE TEACHER

*The Asian Legacy and American Life.* Edited by ARTHUR E. CHRISTY. John Day. \$3.50.

A truly unusual book, setting forth with sober scholarship many debts to Asian civilization which most of us have never suspected. Each chapter is by a different eminent authority on some phase of oriental-occidental cultural relations. The book reads easily enough; but, because of its meatiness and the



unfamiliarity of the ground it covers, more than one reading is required for any comfortable feeling of mastery.

*Walden Revisited.* By GEORGE F. WHICHER. Packard. \$2.00.

An appreciation of Thoreau and his work, in which Walden Pond is little more than a point of departure and even *Walden* not dominant. The eleven-chapter essay might serve as an "introduction" to Thoreau; it would certainly be an excellent substitute for the usual professorial lecture on Thoreau.

*Plato and Modern Education.* By SIR RICHARD LIVINGSTONE. Macmillan. \$0.75.

The Rede Lecture given in 1944 at Cambridge. The author soberly explores the consequences of the practice in modern education of ignoring Plato's vision of the "Idea of the Good," "that which sheds light on all things." The result, he thinks, is that little guidance is given for using the tools of civilization.

*The Flowering of Byron's Genius.* By PAUL GRAHAM TRUEBLOOD. Stanford University Press. \$2.50.

A critique of *Don Juan* as social satire, including a detailed account of contemporary periodical criticism.

*Literary Currents in Hispanic America.* By PEDRO HENRIQUEZ-UREÑA. Harvard University Press. \$3.50.

An important, perhaps the first, milestone on a literary highway newly opened to our interests. A cultural survey of Latin America from the time of the *conquistadores* to the present. Originally prepared as the Charles Eliot Norton Lectures for 1940-41. Includes full notes, bibliographies, and index on Hispanic-American literature in general and on individual writers.

## FOR THE STUDENT

*The Merchant of Venice.* By WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE  
Edited by GEORGE LYMAN KITTREDGE. Ginn.  
\$0.75.

Fifteenth in the individual volumes of plays with the Kittredge notes. The notes for this volume, found among the papers of the late Professor Kittredge, are here edited by a former student of his, Professor Colby Sprague, who is responsible for the textual notes and the glossary.

*A Foreword to Literature.* By ERNEST ERNEST. Appleton-Century.

To help the college student, beginning the study of literature, to judge good books for himself. Based on two premises: that literature is one of the arts and must be studied as an art and that most students are not ready to recognize a good book when they see it, but need to have pointed out the fundamental artistic values in specific works. Illustrated with examples of the good and bad in literature from the various periods.

*Freshman Prose Annual, No. 4.* Edited by ROBERT M. GAY, MODY C. BOATRIGHT, and GEORGE S. WYKOFF. Houghton Mifflin.

The format of this volume is different from most prose collections for freshmen, since it is similar to that of a magazine, with the "same 'eye-appeal' as that provided by publications which students most often read voluntarily." Contents equal seven hundred ordinary book-size pages; exclude fiction and poetry; are varied in style, treatment, and subject; and are divided into five sections: "College and College Life"; "Problems of Social Adjustment"; "Democracy and the War"; "Science and Man"; "Language and Criticism." The last includes an essay on "Walt Whitman and the Peace" by Robert A. Hume, which appeared originally in *College English*. (March, 1945).



# PRACTICAL WORD STUDY

**By W. Powell Jones**

*Western Reserve University*

This unique vocabulary workbook, an immediate success upon publication, has met with increasing popularity. Among the more than 100 colleges and universities where it has been adopted are:

Arizona State Teachers College  
Connecticut State Teachers College  
George Washington University  
University of Georgia  
Rockford College  
Illinois Wesleyan University  
Iowa State College  
Kansas State Teachers College  
Tulane University  
Boston University  
University of Minnesota  
Princeton University  
Cornell University  
Hunter College  
Woman's College, University of  
North Carolina  
Oklahoma Military Academy  
Pennsylvania State College  
Utah Agricultural College  
University of Texas  
Fresno State College  
Wesleyan University

Arkansas State Teachers College  
Catholic University of America  
University of Florida  
University of Idaho  
Northwestern University  
Indiana University  
University of Wichita  
Kentucky State Teachers College  
University of Maine  
Wayne University  
Rutgers University  
Columbia University  
Brooklyn College  
Union College  
Western Reserve University  
Fenn College  
Willamette University  
Sioux Falls College  
Emory and Henry College  
Texas Technological College  
Georgetown University  
University of Wisconsin

100 tear-out pages • \$1.00

---

---

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

114 Fifth Avenue

New York 11, N.Y.